SENECA'S MEDEA
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PREFACE

No new commentary on Seneca's Medea has appeared in English since Kingery's work, Three Tragedies of Seneca, which was originally published in 1908 and reprinted in 1966. It therefore seemed worthwhile to produce a commentary that might take into account the valuable work done on the tragedies since 1908 and might attempt to interpret Medea in more detail than the scope of Kingery's book permitted him. I have paid particular attention to literary, dramatic and philosophical questions and have kept metrical, syntactical and textual comment to a minimum. Except where otherwise indicated I have followed the text of Medea in Theodor Thomann, Seneca Sämtliche Tragödien (Zurich and Stuttgart, 1961) 1, 240-310. Thomann's text pays more note of the German tradition that Leo, and Feiper and Richter disparaged unduly.

I wish to express my gratitude to Professors McKay and Shepherd for their patience, helpful advice and stimulating encouragement.
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CHAPTER ONE

Authorship and Dating

There can be little doubt that Medea is the work of Seneca the philosopher. The manuscripts attribute the tragedies to Seneca,\(^1\) and in Quint. 9, 2, 9 a quotation from Med. v. 451 is attributed to Seneca.\(^2\) Seneca's poetry is mentioned in Quint. 10, 1, 28; Flin. Ep. 5, 3, 5; and Tac. Ann. 14, 52. It is true that there is no specific mention of Seneca's tragedies in these passages, but Tacitus uses the same word, "carmina" to describe the tragedies of Pomponius Secundus, (Ann. 11, 3).

The arguments against Senecan authorship are trifling. Seneca himself doesn't mention the tragedies but no stress should be placed on this dangerous argument ex silentio. The distinction made by the fifth century writer Sidonius (9, 230 ff.) between Seneca the philosopher and Seneca the tragedian may well be due to a misunderstanding of Mart. 1, 61.

The internal evidence of Medea and most of the other nine tragedies supports Senecan authorship. As J.W. Duff\(^3\) observes, "The short pointed sententiae both in form and in expression resemble his prose; and there are frequent parallels in thought, especially if, as often occurs, the thought assumes a Stoic cast."

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1 It is true that the majority (though not all) of the manuscripts attribute their authorship to a Marcus Seneca but mistakes of this kind are common enough.

2 When Quint. speaks of Seneca, he means Seneca the philosopher, except perhaps in 9, 2, 96, when the Elder Seneca may be meant.

Of the other plays, the *Octavia* is almost certainly not the work of Seneca. That play is not included in Ξ. Seneca himself appears as a character and there are important differences in metre and language from the other tragedies.¹ His authenticity has also been doubted, because of its great length and the number of borrowings from the rest of the Senecan corpus. Perhaps the work is a first draft by Seneca himself or perhaps M. Coffey may be right in raising the possibility that "genuine fragments by Seneca have been enormously inflated by an imitator who is very close in style and date."²

It would otiose to provide a sketch of Seneca's career here. His inconsistencies have often been condemned. The strain caused by the conflict between his moral ideals and the political exigencies of his association with Nero must have been immense and has probably left its mark on the tragedies (see pp. 22-3 below).

It is quite impossible to date any of the tragedies with confidence,³ though *Medea* is probably later than 45-6 A.D. (see on vv. 374-9). Seneca's argument with Pomponius about tragic diction (Quint. 8, 3, 31) merely shows

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¹ R. Helm, "Die Praetexta Octavia", *Sitz.-Ber.* (Berlin, 1934), pp. 283-347, makes out an impressive case against authenticity.


that Seneca was interested in the topic about 51 B.C.; see C. Cichorius, Romische Studien (Leipzig, 1922), pp. 426-9. If one accepts that "carmina crebris factitare" (Tac. Ann. 14, 52) refers to tragedies, most of the tragedies may well date from Nero's reign - a period when Seneca must have been under a great deal of stress.

Dramatic Elements and Staging

Sources of the Plot

Euripides' Medea became the accepted version of Medea's activities at Corinth and directly or indirectly it is the main source of Seneca's plot. Miller's parallel outlines of the plays reveal how far Seneca has departed from Euripides - no Aegeus scene; the briefest of Messenger speeches, no correspondence between the prologues or the choruses. The most obvious addition in Seneca's play is the magic scene (vv. 670-648). There are several other minor differences in detail (e.g. see on vv. 179-80; 255-6; 263; 570-4). The Creon scene in Seneca is based on Euripides' scene, Seneca's Jason scene shows the influence of the two Jason scenes in Euripides, and the events of Seneca's final scenes are roughly based on Euripides, though in Seneca, Medea kills her children on the stage. Verbal echoes and echoes of Euripides' ideas are discussed in p. below.

There were several later Greek plays on the Medea theme, but it seems


unlikely that Seneca used these obscure works. Miss Marti's attempt to find prototypes for Seneca's tragedies in the tragedies of Crates and Diogenes is misguided. Nor, in view of Seneca's distaste for the early Latin writers (Gell. 12, 2), is it likely that he made much use of the Medea tragedies by Ennius and Accius; in any case the former at least seems to have followed Euripides fairly closely.

A more probably influence is Ovid's Medea. It had a high reputation in antiquity (cf. Quint. 10, 1, 98; Tac. Dial. 12) and in view of the extent of Seneca's borrowings from Ovid, he must surely have made use of the latter's Medea. Several of the differences in plot between Euripides and Seneca may be due to Ovid, but since Ovid's Medea is lost, speculation is fruitless. It seems improbable that Seneca could have followed Ovid too closely. Ovid's other treatments of the Medea theme may have influenced Seneca's plot: Ov. Her. 12, 133-56 may have spurred the marriage chorus (vv. 56-115) and Not. 7, 179-321 may have spurred Seneca's magic scene (vv. 670-842).

Dramatic Structure

Seneca's plays (apart from the incomplete Phoen.) were divided into five acts by the editors of the sixteenth century, in the belief that Seneca was following Horace's dictum "nempe minor nee sit quinto productione actu/ fabula" (Ars Poetica, vv. 190-1). If the period between choral odes is meant by act, Med. conforms

1 "The Prototypes of Seneca's Tragedies", CP, 42 (1947), 1-16.

to the pattern, but severe difficulties arise in the case of Phaed. and Oed. \(^1\) Anliker\(^2\) shows that on the whole the corresponding acts of the various tragedies cover similar stages in the development of the plot.

Some\(^3\) have felt that Seneca in his concern to make individual scenes rhetorically effective has neglected dramatic unity in many of the tragedies, Seneca's emphasis on the individual episode is certainly great but in Med., at least, there are no important inconsistencies.\(^4\) What is more the play is firmly linked together by the subtle foreshadowing of Medea's murders, in the many double-entendres (listed on p. 29) and in the many (often ironic) repetitions of words and motifs that have occurred earlier in the play.\(^5\)

The individual scenes are discussed in the commentary but some general observations may be made here. The prologue as in most of the other plays is a passionate bit of rhetoric that gives no background information but concentrates on the emotional situation. In Med. the prologue also plays on the audience's knowledge of the plot in a series of ingenious double-entendres that hint at the means of Medea's revenge. The weakness of the prologue from the dramatic

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3. E.g., W.H. Friedrich, "Untersuchungen zu Senecas dramatischer Technik" (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 135-6, though Friedrich does allow that such discrepancies are minimal in Med.
4. See on vv. 542-3, 847 ff. for some minor difficulties.
5. See on vv. 26; 56-115; 295; 401-6; 408; 649-78; 945-6; 970; 1013; 1015.
standpoint is that by presenting Medea in a paroxysm of rage at the outset, it diminishes the effect of her later outbursts. Most of the other scenes reveal a similar readiness to sacrifice dramatic effectiveness in the interests of rhetorical considerations. The most obvious example is the long description of Medea's magic (vv. 670-848) that replaces Euripides' fine messenger-speech and throws the whole play out of balance. Action and the dramatic conflict that depends on the interplay of personality is largely lacking. In the Creon scene (vv. 177-300), for instance, Seneca does not make the outcome (the granting of a day's delay to Medea) the result of a dramatic duel, but tricks out the scene with sententiae and set speeches. His dialogue is wooden, for there is no real contact between his characters except at a very superficial verbal level. The same is true of the Jason scene (vv. 431-578), though there the climax "sine est tenetur; vulneri patuit locus" (v. 550) is better prepared. It is however unfair to judge Seneca by the standards of Greek tragedy or the modern stage. He is not interested in dramatic action, but in passionate emotions and the verbally impressive expression of them.

Seneca does not follow Horace's exhortation to make the chorus play the role of an actor (A.P. v. 195). Apart from the odes, the chorus merely asks the Messenger four brief questions (v. 881 ff.). In Med. at least Seneca does accord with Horace's demand that the choral odes be relevant to and consistent with the plot (A.P. vv. 196-7). The first chorus, a marriage song, is a calm contrast to Medea's frenzied prologue and provides a concrete motivation for Medea's further outbursts. The last chorus, with its

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1 The short final scene (vv. 978-1027) is something of an exception.
description of Medea's rage contains many ironic echoes in phrase and imagery of the epithalamium. The second and third choruses both foreshadow Medea's vengeance with their comments about the rashness of the first mariners (vv. 301-64), their description of the fates of the Argonauts (vv. 607-69), their warnings about the ferocity of a deserted wife (vv. 579-94) and the menace of Medea herself (vv. 362-3). Thus these two choruses are clearly relevant to the theme of the play, while the first and last odes bear directly on the action. Marx argues that in Seneca different lyric metres have different functions. This is not readily apparent in the choruses of Medea, though the metres in the magic scene do seem designed to match the subject-matter (see on vv. 740-348).

Characterization

It would seem strange in a study of any play to omit a discussion of the characters. Yet in a study of Seneca, such a discussion could almost be dispensed with. As C. Garton reminds us, "Character is simply the whole impression which a persona makes and how he makes it, depends on the play". Seneca is much less interested than modern playwrights or even the Greek tragedians in getting under the skin of his characters; what is important to him is the use of his character to reveal his ideas and work upon his audience. Medea in a sense is the personification of an emotion, moulded by rhetoric and the exigencies of the traditional story. Herrmann's

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1 See J. D. Bishop, the Choral Odes of Seneca, Theme and Development (Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1964), p. 239 ff. for a discussion of the relations between chorus and theme of the play.

2 Funktion und Form der Charlieder in den Seneca - Tragedien (Diss. Heidelberg, 1932), p. 10 ff. See also Bishop, p. 32 ff.

3 The Background to Character Portrayal in Seneca, CP 54 (1959), 3.
lengthy discussion\(^1\) of the characters in isolation seems quite misguided. Coffey goes to the other extreme and asserts (p. 155), "the rhetorical technique of Seneca's plays makes continuity of personality impossible", and dismisses (p. 136) Medea's affectionate attitude in v. 417 as a rhetorical trick. No doubt it is, but this and the similar attitude in v. 137 ff. are part of the overall impression Medea makes on us and she is at least "consistent in her inconsistency". In this lingering love for Jason and in the emphasis on her witchcraft, Seneca's Medea differs from Euripides' character.

It would be wrong to see in "Medea, Fiam" (v. 171) and "Medea nunc sum" (v. 910) evidence that Seneca intended Medea to be a developing character (see on v. 910). Her rage and desire for revenge are strong from the outset of the play. It is merely that at v. 910 she is deciding on a more dreadful revenge than she had yet hit upon - a revenge that will make her the Medea of tradition.

Seneca does suggest with some subtlety the gradual emergence of the idea of killing the children. At first the idea is buried in Medea's subconscious, and she gives voice to it, without understanding what she means (vv. 26; 39; 40; 223; 289; 421-2; 523). Then in a dramatic aside (v. 550) she decides to seek vengeance through the children, though the means are not yet fixed. In vv. 899-10 there is another unconscious forecast and it is only in v. 910 ff. that Medea clearly hits on the child-murder; note especially, "nescio quid forox/ decrevit animus intus et nondum sibi audebat fateri" (vv. 917-8).

The other characters in the play are shadowy figures. Seneca

\(^1\)Le Theatro de Seneque (Paris, 1924), pp. 392-470.
stresses Jason's fear (see on v. 104). As W. K. sangery observes, comparing his with Euripides character, "In the one case he is a smooth-tongued egotist, in the other a self-confessed coward". Creon is pompous and unsure of himself (note especially v. 250 ff.). Neither of them is a worthy opponent for Medea. The nurse's role is to dissuade and describe; similar figures appear in several of the tragedies (see on vv. 116-73).

**Staging**

If the play were staged presumably the two adjacent stage-buildings would be Creon's palace and Medea's house and the action would take place in front of these. This does raise the difficulty that Medea's magic rites would have to take place very near the palace but the implausibility of this would be unlikely to distress the audience. Other necessary stage-properties would be an altar (see on v. 573) and a machine to assist Medea's final departure.

It is impossible to decide whether Seneca's plays were intended to be staged. Some have felt that a Roman audience would not have accepted a stage production where Medea killed her children "coram populo", but would this have unduly shocked an audience of Nero's day? Others see practical difficulties in the child-murder but these would not have

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2. For Creon emerges from the palace-door in v. 138, while Medea climbs on to the roof of her own house in the final scene (cf. vv. 995-7).


caused any concern to a stage-manager of some imagination.

However in view of the lack of dramatic action, the subtlety of the suspiciosae and the assumption that the audience know the story, it does seem unlikely that the plays were intended for the public stage. Miss Bieber\(^1\) discussing the Medea painting in the Casa del Centurio at Pompeii, where Medea is shown killing the children, suggests that this may be a representation of a staged performance of Seneca's play rather than that of Euripides where the children are not killed on the stage. There is however a tutor in the picture and this character does not appear in Seneca. In any case precise conclusions cannot be drawn from such tenuous evidence.\(^2\)

The tragedies may have been intended for declamation only.\(^3\) However it is difficult to see what one declamer could have made of vv. 168-71;\(^4\) more than one speaker may of course have been used.

The tempting alternative is that the plays may have been intended for acting in a private theatre\(^5\) where Seneca could be sure of an audience that would share his tastes and appreciate his wit and rhetorical skill.

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\(^2\) Miss Bieber however does a service in thus reminding us that Medea was a favourite subject in the paintings of the Pompeii region. See K. Scheifeld, Die Wandte Pompei (Berlin, 1957), pp. 121; 196; 247; 261; 262, for further information.

\(^3\) Cf. Tac. Dial. 2-11, for tragedies designed for declamation.


\(^5\) Seneca himself refers to such a theatre (M.O. 7, 32, 3). Note also the existence of a private theatre in an Imperial villa at Posilippo.
Philosophy and the Personal Vision

In the case of most great works of art it is highly unsatisfactory to discuss in isolation their meaning or moral lessons; in Greek tragedy, for instance, action, poetry and thought are one artistic whole. Seneca's plays, however, invite such piecemeal treatment. It is not merely that they are the work of a prolific writer of Stoic prose treatises: the plays themselves are studded with apothegms and run through with abstract motifs. 1

The various views expressed or implicit in Medea will first be examined and compared with the views of Stoic orthodoxy and those of Seneca's prose works. Then an attempt will be made to decide whether the play as a whole was written with a specifically Stoic purpose.

At first sight the theology of Medea seems decidedly un Stoic. It is true that the respectful attitude towards the heavenly bodies2 (cf. vv. 30; 402; 1026; and see on p. 4.4) seems to reflect the Stoic idea that the stars consist of the same pure fire as God (cf. SWF I, 165). However the traditional gods are present in all the trappings of mythology. In the prose works, Seneca on several occasions rejects these gods of fable; cf. Cons. Marc. 19, 4; Brev. Vit. 16, 5; Vit. Beat. 26, 6. In Medea they are frequently addressed in prayers or hymns, while in N. 2, 35, 1 such prayers are termed "aegras mentis solacia". These gods however, like those of the


2 Some of this is due to Medea's own descent.
Aeneid, are part of the traditional poetic machinery. Perhaps Esaed, vv. 202-3 may be taken as representing Seneca's real attitude, "vasta ista densa animus ascivit sibi/ Venerisque musen finxit atque arcus dedi". The Stoics had long practised such allegorical interpretations of the popular gods.¹

In this connection it is interesting to note that in de Ira 2, 35, 5, the true face of anger is likened to the poets' descriptions of the Furies (see note on vv. 13-6). The significance of the emphasis in Medea on the deities of magic and the underworld is clear enough.

Fate and fortune seem identified in Ἔρημος vv. 1269-72. The fickleness of fortune is stressed by Medea (vv. 219-22; 236; 568-9) and the harshness of fate by Jason (v. 431). These are popular, not specifically Stoic views. Clearly Stoic however is the attitude to fortune advocated by Medea in vv. 159, 176 (see notes on these lines) and in v. 520. Particularly interesting is v. 176, where Medea expresses the Stoic view that fortune operates in the exterior not interior life: "fortuna opes afferre non animus potest". Wrongdoing then is caused by an act of will; cf. "mene impudicus facere, non casus solet." (Esaed. 735).

The state of soul sought by the Stoics was calm tranquillity free from the turbulence of emotions. Several times Medea is urged to bring herself to this condition of peace (cf. vv. 425-6; 537-8; 557-9). True and lasting peace of mind can only be achieved by the constant practice of virtus. Medea's defiant "masque potest non esse virtutis locus" expresses the Stoic attitude well enough, even though her concept of virtus is most un-Stoic. Justice

is one aspect of *virtus*. In *Ep.* 113, 31, it is termed "sacra res" and vV. 439-40 accord with this Stoic view. "sancta si caelum insolit/ Iustitia, numen invoco ac testor tuum." In vW. 329 ff. we are given a glimpse of the Golden Age, when men practised justice and lived in harmony: "candida nostri saecula patres/ videre, procul fraude remotae."

It is a false view of externals that upsets the tranquillity of the soul. It is foolish to prize kingship for instance. *Fortune* (vV. 219-20) or injustice (v. 196) can bring it to an end. Again the truly wealthy man is "parvo dives". *Medea* (v. 541) shows the right attitude to royalty and wealth. "contemner animus regias, ut seis/opes potest solisque." However she is unable to take the same Stoic view of the provocation offered by Jason's new marriage and falls prey to anger, "affectum ... maxime ex omnibus taestrum an rabidum" (*De Ira* 1, 1, 1).

*Medita* is above all a study in violent anger; the play's attitude to and depiction of Medea's anger accord in many points with the views expressed in *De Ira*. Medea's reaction to the *hymenecus* accords with the analysis of the onset of anger in *De Ira* 2, 1, 3-5 (see note on vW. 116-24). In this connection, the use of "proludit" in v. 907 is interesting, for "principia prolumentia affectibus" are the first involuntary impulses that occur in response to stimuli (*De Ira* 2, 2, 5).

Seneca defined anger as "cupiditas ulciscendae injuriae" (*Lact.* *De Ira Dei* 17), and this certainly fits Medea's case. The violence of such anger finds explicit expression in vW. 155-7; 591-4, and is clear from Medea's behaviour throughout the play. What is particularly dangerous about anger is the speed with which it reaches its full power ("alia paulatim
intrant, repentina et universa vis huius est"; de Ira 2, 36, 6) and it is
noteworthy that Medea is already angry at the outset of the play (see note
on vv. 1-55). Anger, like the other emotions, is blind (see v. 591 and note)
and near madness (vv. 123 and note, de Ira 1, 1, 3; etc.). Characters in
the grip of anger do not mind perishing provided they can destroy their enemy
(see vv. 426-8 and note; 593-4; de Ira 1, 1, 1; 3, 3, 2). To satisfy their
lust for revenge they will even destroy the object of their love (cf. de Ira
1, 5, 2; 3, 3, 3).

Anger can become a disease (cf. Syr 3, 424) and gain a more permanent
grip on the mind (Ep. 75, 11). Medea has repeatedly suffered fits of anger
(v. 394) and has shown no restraint in love or hate (vv. 397-8; 866-7).
The importance of habit was stressed by the Stoics (de Ira 2, 20, 2; Tran,
An. 10, 1-2). Its bad effects on Medea are clear (cf. vv. 48-50; 563-4;
908-10). Anger and the prospect of revenge bring pleasure (cf. v. 389; de
Ira 2, 321). Repeated indulgence in anger can lead to a callous delight in
the cruellest crimes (cf. vv. 991-2 and note; 911-4; 1016; de Ira 2, 5, 3).
The Stoics believed that a close relationship exists between the body and soul
(Ep. 65, 24) and this connection is clear from the detailed descriptions of
the physical manifestations of emotion in Medea (cf. vv. 186-7; 382-90;
445-6; 853-61). The descriptions of Medea's physical symptoms are remarkably
like that of the angry man in de Ira 1, 1, 3 (quoted on vv. 382-90). It is
easier to exclude anger than to control it (de Ira 1, 7, 2). Medea knows
this in theory (vv. 203-4), but in practice fails to attempt it. If reason
does not successfully resist the emotion at the outset, it becomes sub-
servient to it; "cœsorta omnia sexual et excusar mens ei servit quo impellitur,"
\((\textit{de Ira} 1, 7, 3).
Seneca then does not feel that a fit of anger can be
calmed by reason; "in affectum ipse mutatur ideoque non potest utilem illas
vim et salutarem proditam iam infinitatemque resuscare," (ibid. 1, 8, 2).
It is noteworthy that Medea's inward battle is fought rather between revenge
and mother-love, than between reason and passion. This accords with \(\textit{de Ira}
1, 17, 3-4: \) "\(\textit{Irae meae misericordia retro egit} \). Some have felt that the
frequent apostrophes of animus or the emotion felt indicate acceptance of the
Pseudonidian doctrine of the divided soul. It would be dangerous to read too
much into what is a literary and rhetorical convention (see on v. 41). Again,
though in Ep. 92, 1 Seneca accepts Pseudonidian view, \(\textit{de Ira} 1, 8, 3 \) presumes
an undivided soul and asserts that the mind is transformed into the passion.
It matters little then from the logical view whether Medea addresses animus or
dolor.

The Nurse is often spoken of as the voice of reason in the tragedies.\(^1\)
No doubt she is on the side of reason, but the arguments she uses in Medea
are not those of Stoic orthodoxy. They do however bear a close resemblance
to the advice given by Seneca in \(\textit{de Ira} \) to those who would calm another's
anger. One should seek delay (\(\textit{de Ira} 2, 29, 1; 3, 1, 2; 3, 39, 4; \) cf. v. 150 ff.)
even pretending to side with the angry person (\(\textit{de Ira} 3, 39, 3; 3, 40, 1;\)
cf. v. 150 ff.). If this fails to calm him, one should try to make him
afraid (\(\textit{de Ira} 3, 1, 2; 3, 39, 4; \) cf. vv. 168-9; 429), or ashamed (\(\textit{de Ira}
3, 1, 2; 3, 39, 4) cf. v. 171). Fear indeed is the only means of checking

\(^1\) Cf. B. Harti, \"Seneca's Tragedies. A New Interpretation\", \textit{TAPA}, 76 (1945),
232; James P. Brady, Jr., \textit{A Study of the Stoicism in Senecan Tragedy}, pp.
87-8.
the anger of some (de Ira 3, 40, 5), but Medea is unresponsive for she knows she is more powerful than her enemies. Such anger will cease only when the desire for vengeance is sated; "nonnumquam, si plures sunt qui perire meruerunt, post duorum triumve sanguinem occidere desinit" (de Ira 1, 17, 6).

Ira and the related concepts furor and dolor run through Medea as powerful motifs and seem to have an independent existence of their own. Of these dolor is perhaps the most interesting. As Regenbogen observes, "et formas dolor/ errat per omnes" (HO v. 245), might be taken as the theme of all the plays.1 Dolor suggests the mental pain that constantly nourishes passion. Dolor has caused Medea's previous crimes, though these pale in comparison with its present urgings (vv. 49; 907). Its inability to hide itself is stressed by Medea (v. 155); Jason sees it on her face (v. 446) and the nurse visualizes it expanding inside Medea's mind (v. 671). Medea addresses dolor in attempts to calm it when under the influence of amor (v. 139) or pietas (v. 944), and at other times to encourage it (vv. 914; 1016). In the grip of dolor Medea kills the children (vv. 951; 1011; 1019), and the use of the word "ultarem" in v. 1020 suggests how real and powerful this force is. Ira and furor are equally prominent.2 Medea's passion is so strong and at times gains so complete a grip on her soul that she herself seems to be a concrete manifestation of the emotion; "vultum furoris cerno", as the nurse puts


2 Ira: cf. vv. 51; 203; 381; 394; 463; 494; 506; 556; 591; 853; 866; 868; 902; 927; 938; 943; 944; 989. Furor: vv. 52; 386; 392; 396; 406; 852; 909; 930.
it (v. 396). Medea's actions are similar to those ascribed to anger in de Ira (1, 7, 7): "videbis caedes ac venena et ... urbiun clades et ... subjecta tectis facies".

The influence of Stoic thought then in Medea is clear and in particular the parallels with de Ira are striking. Some go further and see this and the other plays as strongly didactic. Miss Marti presents this view in its most extreme form. For her the tragedies are "philosophical propaganda plays", deliberately designed to give moral instruction in Neo-Stoicism. But what sort of propaganda is it when the criminal not only escapes, but is born in triumph through the heavens? Brady seems in sympathy with Marti's view and by some rather circular reasoning explains (p. 259) the lesson of the Medea: "This play, then, is an object lesson in the awful consequences of anger ... Medea is the incarnation of a capital emotion. As such we must loathe her. Otherwise the moral of the drama is hopelessly obscured." However Seneca has not totally alienated Medea from us. Since the drama is concentrated on her internal world, we become deeply involved in her thoughts and feelings, and in the scenes with Creon and Jason, Seneca has given her arguments that appeal to our emotions and sense of justice.

Brady (p. 297) does concede that Seneca had a literary purpose as well as a philosophical one. Marti however will have none of this, and turns

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1 TAPA, 76 (1945), 217.
to Seneca's prose works for evidence that Seneca believed that the one purpose of literature should be moral instruction. In several passages Seneca does declare that poetry should have an ethical function. However the wealth of poetic quotation in the prose works and the fact that these quotations often serve a purely literary purpose show that Seneca had a deep and abiding love of poetry. To a certain extent his stress on its ethical value serves as a justification of his own love of poetry. A study of Medea itself shows that Miss Marti's view is a crude over-simplification. For all its faults the play reveals a powerful imagination and a love of words and wit for their own sake.

In the course of an eloquent article, Herington terms the plays "religious drama." Bracy (p. 293), declares that they are "essentially optimistic". It is true that we know from the prose works what the Stoic answer to provocation and calamity should be. But where do we find this expressed in Medea? Only in the mouth of Medea herself, when she mischievously quotes Stoic doctrine to prove a point. It is surely bad criticism to use the prose works to produce an interpretation of the play that is totally at variance with the evidence of the play itself.

Observing the similarity in vision between the exempla of the prose

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works and the tragedies, Herington has termed the latter "extended ... exempla". The similarity is real, but exempla seems an unfortunate term to use, since it too easily suggests what Marti means by the term - that Medea for example is intended to serve as an illustration of the opinions expressed in de Ira.\(^2\)

It is rather that the striking and sometimes morbid imagination revealed briefly in these exempla has found greater freedom in the tragedies.

In the prose works there are many eloquent exempla that suggest that Seneca is fascinated by the very cruelty he condemns. Regenbogen rightly observed (p. 54) that "die Tragödien nicht anders als die Prosaschriften ein Böse und Blutiges der Welt schaukelt". The de Ira contains some obnoxious examples - perhaps worst of all is the fate of Telesphorus the Rhodian (3, 17, 3-4).\(^3\) Recently attempts have been made\(^4\) to defend Seneca's tragedies against the charges of bloodthirstiness. It is true that Seneca does not luxuriate in violence itself as much as he might. What is repellent in Seneca is the cold-blooded brutality with which characters insist on performing their crimes before the eyes of their victim's parents, to the accompaniment of witticisms.\(^5\)

1  Ibid. p. 443.

2  TAPA, 76 (1945), 229.

3  See also in de Ira alone, 2, 33 (Caligula and Pater); 2, 5, 4 (Hannibal); 2, 5, 5 (Volatus); 3, 14, 1-2 (Cambyses and Praeboxas); 3, 15, 1 (Asgares and Harpagus); 3, 16, 3 (Darius and Oeobasus); 3, 16, 4 (Xerxes and Pythius); 3, 17, 1 (Alexander and Glitus); 3, 18, 1-2 (Sulla, Catiline and Marius); 3, 18, 3-19, 5 (Caligula); 3, 40, 2 (Vetius Pollio).


More grandiosely dreadful are several prose descriptions of the end of the world, an event which Seneca sees as caused by mankind’s moral failure. Human decadence and the end of the world are traditional Stoic themes but Seneca’s interest in them is peculiarly obsessive. A return to chaos is also a frequent theme in the tragedies. It is perhaps most clearly linked with human evil in Thy. vv. 789-883, when Thyestes is eating his children. But almost all of Seneca’s plays deal with disrupted relationships and the reversal of normal moral values, and this moral disintegration is often paralleled by a collapse of the physical laws of the universe.

In Medea, the fall from the blissful innocence of the Golden Age is caused by the first sea-voyage that upset the physical balance of the world ("temerata ponti iura" – v. 614). "Exigit poenas mare provocatum" (v. 616), and the implication is that Medea is part of the sea’s vengeance. One train of thought in the play seems to see Medea as a symbol of all the forces of passion, anger and unreason in the world. It is interesting to note that Hippolytus (Phaed. vv. 540-2), sees anger (along with greed and lust) as marking the end of the Golden Age.

1 E.g. Nerv. 3, 27-30; 6, 2, 7; Cons. Marc. 26, 6; Cons. Polyb. 1, 2; p. 71, 12-3. Cf. Sen. 6, 22.

2 As Herington reminds us (p. 433), Seneca was strongly influenced by the Stoic habit of viewing "all phenomena as belonging to the same order of being."

3 E.g. HF v. 941 ff.; Oed. vv. 366; 371; Ag. vv. 53-6; 296; 485 ff.; 758.

4 Cf. Medea’s parody (vv. 46-8) of Anchises (Verg. Aen. 6, 724-7), that suggests a claim to embody the forces of unreason and violence; the nurse’s comment "vultum furoris cerno" (v. 396); Medea’s sweeping claim for the power and endurance of her anger (v. 400 ff.).
Medea herself looks back wistfully to a period of personal happiness before she fled with Jason (vv. 211-9). Now in her mental distress, she actively seeks to perform evil. Her threats of dire vengeance on her enemies are matched by her desire to assault the physical world. In the wedding song, we are given another picture of an innocence that is to be destroyed. Several ironic repetitions of phrases and images stress the unfulfillment of the chorus' conventional good wishes.\(^1\) The most striking example of the reversal of normal behaviour comes with the child-murder. We may note the parallel disturbances of nature in Medea's reversal of physical laws (vv. 752-69), and in the failure of water to extinguish the magic fire (vv. 888-90). At the end of the play, Medea escapes into the heavens in her magic chariot, and violence and the irrational seem apotheosized. Jason's final words underline their victory. "Per alta spatia sublimi asthere" is a line re-dolent with traditional Stoic reverence for the heavens and the calmness and security they associated with them. But the utter last line reveals the falseness of this security and the powerlessness of the heavens before human evil: "testare nullae esse qua veharis deos".

How are we to account for this emphasis on moral disintegration and fascination with cruelty? To an extent at least the answer lies in the

\(^1\) See on vv. 56-115.
general circumstances of the age in which Seneca lived and in his own career.

The post-Augustan Empire was an age of extravagance, immorality and a cruelty that was fostered by the brutal performances of the amphitheatre. Walker sees in this period "a profound disturbance in the Roman mind". Small wonder that the writers of the age, Lucan and Petronius as well as Seneca, indulge in the horrific and are obsessed with cosmic and moral chaos. Manifestations of the vogue for cruelty also appear in the wall painting repertoire of Pompeii (e.g. House of the Vettii).

The princes tended to display the weaknesses of the age in exaggerated form. The strain on those who came into close contact with the emperor must have been almost unbearable. Seneca's career illustrates the physical and psychological dangers of high office. Philosophy could give a man strength and an escape to a world of higher values, but the pressures

1. Hagenbogen (pp. 11-25) observes that Seneca's tragedies have been most appreciated at times of great emotional and political strain. Herington (p. 461) points out that the work of Hagenbogen himself and his German followers was produced at such a period. It is significant that recently a sympathetic re-appraisal of Seneca's tragedies has been going on in the English-speaking world. One may cite Herington's article, the perceptive series of articles by Henry and Walker, and the Peter Brook production in London of Seneca's Oedipus (March, 1966). The danger now is that the contemporary taste for angst for angst's sake will inflate Seneca into a great dramatist.


3. Tacitus, also, frequently points to the reversal of normal values in this period: cf. Ann. 4, 33; 6; 4, 36; 5; 3, 4; 12, 67, 3; 13, 12, 2; 14, 3, 17; 14, 13, 3; 14, 15, 9; 14, 64, 5; 15, 50; 4.

placed on Seneca by Nero and Agrippina forced Seneca to compromise his principles repeatedly. The fascination with cruelty and crime that appears not infrequently in the prose works and runs throughout the tragedies reveals the invasion of Seneca's philosophical world by the real world of the Early Empire.

In Medea we have an overt link with Seneca's own day in the Second Chorus. In listing the dangers faced by the Argonauts, the chorus had ended by asking what had been the reward of that first voyage. "Gold and Medea" (vv. 361-3) comes the reply. With "nunc iam cessit pontus et omnes/ patitur leges" (vv. 363-4), Seneca abruptly turns to his own times, with their ease of travel, and forecasts future discoveries. The implication seems clear. Man has conquered the sea, but has Nero's Rome conquered what Medea ("maius ... mari ... malum" v. 362) stood for — violence, cruelty, and the triumph of anger over reason?

**Style**

There had always been a strong rhetorical element in most Roman poetry, but at the end of the Augustan period the attempts to amaze and amuse an audience become more dominant in literature and there is a more intense use of rhetorical devices. Ovid is the herald of the new style and it is significant Seneca's tragedies contain more echoes of Ovid than of any other writer.

The main cause of the rhetorical tone in literature lay in the educational system, which put increased stress on oratory at a time when the loss of political freedom had diminished the sphere in which oratory
could be exercised. As a result many continued to declaim the unreal school exercises such as suasoriae and controver siae in adult life. The emphasis was on display and tours-de-force: that would win frequent applause from the audiences. Seneca the elder (Contr. 9, praef. 1) aptly describes the rhetor as one "qui declamationem parat scribit non ut vincat sed ut placeat ... cupid enim se adprobare non causam."

The younger Seneca received a thorough rhetorical training under such leading teachers as Mamarus Scarruus; Callicius, Musa and Julius Bassus. The son of a connoisseur of rhetoric, the younger Seneca spent much time with his father and brothers listening to the declaimers and it is clear that the boys too loved rhetoric. It is not surprising that Seneca's prose works and tragedies show ample evidence of rhetorical influences.

The influence of declamation is clear in many of the long speeches. The extensive use of undramatic monologue or virtual monologue (see vv. 1-55; 116-49; 382-96; 397-425; 431-446; 670-739; 893-973) shows the influence of the rhetors both directly, and indirectly through the intense speeches of some of Ovid's heroines. Seneca's monologues are replete with rhetorical

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2 See Sen. Contr. 10, praef. 2, 8, 9, 12.

3 Sen. Contr. 1, praef. 4; 10, praef. 2.

4 "Nolo autem vos iuvenes mei contristari quod a declamatoribus ad historicos transeo".

5 E.g. Met. 7, 11 ff.; 8, 44 ff.; 8, 473 ff.; 9, 143 ff.; 9, 473 ff.; 9, 726 ff.; 10, 320 ff. Euripides had of course shown the way; e.g. Med. v. 1021 ff.
devices, as indeed are most of his long speeches (e.g. vv. 236-51; 447-59). Such speeches would give the declamer's histrionic ability ample opportunity to express itself with sudden changes of mood (e.g. vv. 25; 138-40; 910-21; 923-5, 988 ff.) passionate entreaties (e.g. vv. 1-19; 20-5; 32-6; 285-90; 478-82; 531-5; 740-5) and adynata and the like (vv. 401-6). An interesting feature of Seneca's longer speeches is his skill and subtlety in depicting the train of thought of the speaker. For interesting examples of this stream of consciousness technique, see vv. 26-36; 135 ff.; 397-9.

Description

A regular feature of the declamations was descriptive. Some orators would ensure that the audience heard these gems by introducing them with "describamus nunc ego" or a similar phrase (Sen. Contr. 2, 5, 6; 2, 1, 26). There are many more undramatic descriptions in Seneca's Med. than in Euripides' play and this is probably due in large part to the influence of the declamations. Even in vv. 675-739, where the Nurse describes Medea's magic preparations, the description is essentially undramatic for much of the speech is devoted to lists of the places where and the occasions when Medea gathers her snakes (vv. 680-704) and plants (vv. 707-36). Many of Seneca's descriptions tend to reduce themselves to such lists (e.g. vv. 211-6; 226-33; 451-7; 465-76; 753-69; 771-84; 820-37. Generally he gives each item a touch of colourful detail and then moves on. In vv. 714-9, however, there is a subtle relation between the successive items that presents a frightening picture of a springtime made poisonous and deformed by Medea's magic. On the whole the descriptions in the chorus are more diffuse and "poetic", though here too the tendency towards lists is evident (e.g. vv. 75-89; 311-7; 616-69).
Since his descriptions of particular people or things are not usually extended, Seneca relies heavily on epithets to add colour and emphasis: as we shall see, he has a particular fondness for geographic adjectives, some quite conventional but others (e.g. "Gangeticum", v. 865) adding romantic colour. Seneca also has a penchant for adjectives with an archaic ring. Thus we find adjectives in -fer: ignifer, v. 34; scerifer, v. 59; armifer, v. 468; squamifer, v. 685; gemmifer, v. 723; lucifer v. 842; in -ger: belliger v. 64; thyrsiger v. 110; in -icus: letiferous v. 577; nidiferous v. 687; -sena: terrigena v. 470. Most interesting of these is nidiferous which is only found in v. 710, where it is used so effectively with ver.

Not infrequently in order to stress his point, Seneca piles up adjectives that are virtually synonymous with the words to which they are attached: "Furor ... lymphati" (v. 386), "vagus errat" (v. 586) and "nivali ... gelu" (v. 716) are effective in their contexts. Even "ustus accenso Pellas aeno/ arsit" (vv. 666-7) may be justified by the context for Pellas is an island of fire in a sea of water-imagery! But "incerta vas in monte vasa vasa feror" (v. 123), "gelidi pigri frigeris glacies" (v. 736) and "casum ... opacum ... umbrosi" (v. 741) are sheer bombast.

Another characteristic feature of Seneca's tragedies is their love of periphrasis; Seneca delights in avoiding the straightforward names of people and things. Such allusiveness can be the very stuff of poetry (cf. vv. 75-81), but too often the periphrases seem merely intended to display Seneca's knowledge of myth and geography. For some of the more notable examples in Medea, see vv. 59, 62 ff; 67 ff; 71 ff; 75 ff; 82 ff; 105; 110; 131; 212; 226; 243; 313; 336; 342; 350; 355; 455; 608; 610; 625.
In the geographical conditions, some munitions were placed in the west (A. 726).

We were able to determine the general nature of the munitions and theombokor by observing the smoke and the remaining munitions. However, we were unable to determine the exact date of the explosion.

The explosion was caused by a bomb, which was dropped by a plane over the town. The bomb contained a large amount of explosive material.

The explosion was heard in the town, and the following was observed:

1. The explosion was heard from a distance of one mile.
2. The shock was felt for half a mile.
3. The smoke was visible for a mile.

The explosion caused significant damage to the town, including the destruction of several buildings.

In conclusion, the explosion was caused by a bomb dropped by a plane over the town, causing significant damage and loss of life.
to the groves of the Ganges in the east, from "ultima Thule" (v. 379) and "Suevae nobiles" in the north to "divites Arabes" (v. 713) and sunburned Indians (v. 484). A certain carelessness was de rigueur (cf. vv. 622; 713; 720).

Astronomy is a favourite topic in N.O. and several of the tragedies. It plays a lesser role in Medea but note vv. 309-15.

Mythological lore, often in esoteric detail, is another feature of much Silver poetry. It is natural that there are frequent references to earlier incidents in the adventures of Medea and Jason, though the repeated references to the deaths of Absyrtus and Pellas pall a little. The descriptions of the first sea-voyage in the second chorus and of the fate of the Argonauts in the third are pleasing enough and are made relevant to the theme of the play. More tedious are such commonplace as the Furies (vv. 13-6) and the Great Sinners (vv. 744-9). Least acceptable are the elaborate description of the offerings to Hecate (vv. 771-84) and the list of contributors to Medea's magic fire (vv. 820-32). For mythological errors, see vv. 652-3, 655.

Magic and the supernatural are also beloved themes in Silver poetry. Quint. (2, 10, 1) indicates that magic was a frequent topic in the declamations of his day. We have in Medea a long magic scene (vv. 670-842) and the introduction to that scene should be consulted for a discussion of the literary tradition and of the extent to which Seneca reflects magical practice. We also have the brief appearance of a ghost in vv. 955-71, when Medea sees the mangled remains of her brother Absyrtus. Such passages of course provide an excellent opportunity for rhetorical display, but the disproportionate amount of time devoted to Medea's magic weakens its effect and throws the whole play out of balance.
A characteristic feature of the declamations were the *sententiae*. Quint. (6, 5, 2) informs us that the ancients used the word for thoughts in general whereas in his own day by *sententiae* were meant "lumina praecipue in clausulis posita". The older type of *sententiae* was akin to the proverb in that it briefly and aptly expressed some general observation on life. These are common enough in the tragedies, but are generally given particular point by their context. They occur frequently in stichomythia, which in fact is often little more than a contest in quoting *sententiae* (e.g. vv. 159-73; 192-200; 504-5).

More striking are those *sententiae* which are coined for the particular situation and gain their effect from antithesis, alliteration and ingenious allusiveness. Some of the more impressive examples are "parta iam, parta ultio est: / peperi" (vv. 25-6); "damna ream/ sed redde crimen" (v. 245-6); "non revisturi senis" (v. 476), but the Medea is full of them and the reader must be constantly alert for ambiguities of thought and subtle hints or suspiciones (Quint. 9, 2, 65). The extent to which an audience came to expect frequent subtle and witty *sententiae* is shown by the story of Latro, (Sen. Contr. 7, 4, 10) who deliberately ended a sentence with the towering but pointless phrase "inter sepulchra monumenta sunt", and was greeted with thunderous applause.

For *double-entendres* in Med, see vv. 26; 37; 38; 39; 40; 60; 61; 66; 87; 95; 283; 289; 293; 295; 387; 421-2; 552; 1012-3; 1013.

*Rhetorical Devices*

Some of Seneca's other rhetorical devices may be briefly
Verbal irony, with its contrast between what is stated and what is suggested, is a favourite weapon in the orator’s armour. Most of Seneca’s examples have a crisp verbal efficiency: vv. 197; 202; 419; 450; 650-1; 1007-8.

Since so many of Medea’s powers and activities are hyperbolic by normal standards, hyperbole as a figure of speech has little place in the play. Note however the favourite Silver Age conceit of the sea that strikes the stars (vv. 344-5).

Interrogation is of course a frequent device to give vivacity and express emotion. Rhetorical questions are common (e.g. vv. 126, 657; 893) and often they have an answer (e.g. vv. 53-4; 361-3; 561; 929-30, where the replies confirm the implication of the questions; and vv. 137-9; 932-4, where the replies contradict the questions). Questions are used to express resentment (e.g. v. 118 ff.), to cast odium (e.g. vv. 451-9) and in self-exhortation (e.g. vv. 895, 937, 938). Often several questions follow one another. Thus we have six questions in v. 451 ff., four in v. 350 ff. and three in vv. 118 ff.; 560 ff.

The most extended examples of apostrophe occur in vv. 1-12; 740-9, where various deities and powers are invoked. An interesting feature of the tragedies (and one that was much to the declaimers) is the common practice of addressing one’s own soul or emotion. Seneca overindulges in this

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1. Carter’s great collection of material (especially pp. 136-85) is extremely useful. I have however departed from his classification in places and have omitted some of his examples, while adding others.
easy evoker of pseudo-pathos: animus; vv. 41; 895; 927; 976; 988. dolor; vv. 139; 914; 944; 1016; 1019. furor; v. 930. ara; vv. 916; 953.

Exclamation is generally introduced by interjections. Note a (expressing pain) v. 139; eoce (surprise etc); vv. 445; 738; 992; en (excitement) vv. 966; 995; heu (sorrow) v. 649; o vv. 431; 595; 950; 985 (twice), 986. Other striking exclamations occur with bene est vv. 550; 1019. and followed by the imperative vv. 197, 650, 1007.

Climax (termed "incrementum" in Q. 843) is not very effective in the tragedies since as Center (p. 149) observes the emotion in these works is uniformly high. The most impressive example is surely in vv. 837-9. For others, see vv. 45-6; 207-9; 217; 249-50; 277-8; 445-6; 462-4; 488; 592-4; 637-9; 885-7.

Antithesis: (a) single words not closely juxtaposed: vv. 55; 94; 176; 421; 437; 511. (b) single words of opposite meaning in immediate juxtaposition: vv. 288; 333; 354. (c) pairs of words or clauses: vv. 153-6; 159; 194; 477; 492; 654; 779.

Anaphora is very common, particularly with interrogatives. It also occurs with relatives (e.g. vv. 707-17), personal pronouns (vv. 73, 426-7; 487-8; 771-3; 797-805), verbs (vv. 181; 551-2; 828), negatives (e.g. v. 316); adjectives (vv. 502) and prepositions (vv. 285-6; 478-81). There are two instances in Med. where the anaphora is six-fold (vv. 707-17; 797-807). Certain varieties of anaphora were recognized by the theorists: (a) redditio (the same word occurring at the beginning and end of a sentence or clause); vv. 922-3; 947-8; 984; (b) conversio (successive sentences or verses ending in the same word) vv. 504-5 (a striking example); (c) ἀναφορή (repetition at
the beginning of a new clause or verse of the same word ending the preceding) vv. 25–6; (d) ἔλοκτη (repetition of the same word at intervals in conjunction with other figures): vv. 932–4, 943, 989–9; (e) ἐπάνω (items mentioned before, repeated and differentiated); vv. 695–7. Closely related to anaphora is the figure in which the same word is immediately repeated for the sake of emphasis (termed conduplicatio in Auct. Her. 4, 28, 38). This is much commoner in the tragedies than in most other Latin literature. In Med. it occurs with verbs (vv. 25; 32; 423; 447; 527; 845; 911), adverbs (vv. 13; 90; 139; 692; 949; 980; 982), pronouns (vv. 266; 500) and adjectives (vv. 674; 990).

Paronomasia, (word-play) a figure much favoured by the declaimers (see Summers, Select Letters of Seneca, p. lxxxii), is common in the tragedies. Seneca the Elder felt that it was an overused affectation (see e.g. Suas. 7, 11). In Med. are the following examples: (a) the same word (i) change in case of nouns: vv. 225; 511; 512; 563; (ii) change in tense, mood or voice of verbs: vv. 28–218; 561; 563; 950. (b) different words etymologically related: vv. 28; 118–9; 128; 163; 261; 459; 472; 503.

Alliteration, a type of paronomasia, is very common in Medea. A few of the more notable instances are found in vv. 113 (f); 283 (p); 362 (m); 462 (p); 645 (p); 935 (a); 950 (p).

Chiasmus is an effective device for providing emphasis or contrast. The most notable example of verbal chiasmus in Medea is "fas omne cedat, abeat expulsus pudor" (v. 900). For other examples, see vv. 17; 42; 91; 132; 186; 235; 238; 381; 424; 431; 509; 527–8; 532; 578; 673; 693; 723; 744; 939; 943; 947; 984; 997; 1002; 1007.
Imitation

The ancient conception of originality was quite different from our own; writers freely took phrases and lines from one another as well as plots. In the Silver Age dependence on earlier writers was increased by the consciousness that a great age of literature had preceded and by the stress on imitatio in the rhetorical schools.

In Ep. 79, 6 Seneca gives what Sumner (Select Letters, p. 273) describes as "perhaps the most ingenious exposition of the advantages of imitatio contained in all Latin literature". Seneca has been encouraging Lucilius to deal with Actae in his poetry; the fact that Vergil, Ovid and Cornelius Severus have already touched on this theme should not discourage him. "Pratera condicio optima est ultimi; parata verba invent, quae aliter instructa novas facies habent. Nec illis manus init tamquam alienis. Sunt enim publicis". It is only fair to stress Seneca's emphasis on rearranging the words and giving the work nova facies. In Ep. 114, 17-20 he very effectively points out the dangers of slavish imitatio by listing Arruntius' absurd imitations of some of Sallust's stylistic eccentricities.

In Ep. 84, to explain his view of the right use of several models, Seneca uses several analogies of which perhaps the most helpful in that of the bee: "nos quoque has apes debemus imitari et quaecumque ex diversa lectione confessimus, separare, melius enim distincta servantur, deinde adhibita ingenii nostri cura et facultate in unum saporum varia illa libamenta confundere, ut etiam si apparetur, unde sumptum sit, alius tamen esse quam unde sumptum est, apparent".

To what extent has Seneca followed his own precepts? When borrowing from one author he generally attempts to give his lines nova facies. Often
he makes ingenious changes in the grammatical relationship between certain
words or changes the import of words, phrases or ideas: cf. vv. 46-8; 265;
303; 581; 625; 647-9; 715. At times he separates elements in one passage in
his model (cf. v. 4; vv. 37 and 147-9; vv. 78-81 and 94; vv. 579-62 and
593-4), at others he unites various elements that are separate in the source
(cf. vv. 20-4; 301-2; 509-12). Sometimes he compresses and sharpens the
original (e.g. vv. 97-9; 509; 635; 635-9), less often he expands his model
(vv. 301-63; 249-51; 252 ff.).

Seneca is a skilful practitioner of the "dece-technique". We may
perhaps distinguish passages where various models succeed one another in
quick succession (e.g. vv. 27 ff.; 62 ff.; 226-7; 301-6; 309-17; 329-39;
359; etc.); longer passages where one main source is varied with details from
elsewhere (e.g. vv. 116-49; 301-69; 579-94); shorter borrowings where one
source is varied with details from elsewhere (e.g. vv. 96-8; 225-35; 374-5;
490-1; 694-6). Ideally the blending should be so effective that the models
are no longer visible (Ep. 84, 7: "omnia, quibus est adiutus, assequatur").
In some cases however it is possible that Seneca intends us to remember the
source: cf. on vv. 5-7; 20-4; 46-8; 62 ff.; 863-4; 866.

Apart from Seneca's own attempts to disguise his sources, the
difficulty of deciding his various models is increased by his predilection
for common-place themes that occur frequently in Roman poetry. Noteworthy
examples are the Furies (v. 13 ff.); a red and white blush (vv. 99-100);
Saylla (vv. 350-4); statements of the impossible (vv. 401-6); Orpheus' powers
of song (v. 625 ff.); the Great Sinners (v. 743 ff.).

Since the plot of Seneca's Medea is based on Euripides' play, it is
not surprising that certain passages in Seneca seem to echo Euripides; the
similarities however are not usually close. For places where Seneca was probably influenced by Euripides, see vv. 37; 147-9; 161-2; 186 ff.; 192; 249-50; 252 ff.; 294-5; 297-9; 451-60; 490-1; 509; 512; 540-1; 551-7; 562-7; 579-4; 570-6; 635-9; 645-8; 879-80; 926-57. In most of the above cases, Seneca has made Euripides more rhetorical.

Echoes of other Greek writers are few. It is probable that Seneca has Theoc. in mind in vv. 78-81; 94 and Sappho in vv. 96-8. There may be an echo of A.R. in v. 62, while in v. 4 Seneca seems to have in mind his own translation of Cleanthes.

Ovid is certainly Seneca's favourite Latin model - and this though the former's Medea does not survive. The most frequently imitated books are those in which Medea is prominent, Het. 7 and Met. 12. For probably imitations of Het. 7, see Sen. Med. vv. 5-7; 97-8; 225-35; 361-3; 470 ff.; 703; 717; 729; for Met. 12 see Sen. Med. vv. 5-7; 27; 116-7; 155; 225-35(?); 280; 489; 501-3; 953. Other likely echoes of Ov. Het. occur at vv. 32; 65-6; 100; 228; 335; 350-4; 374-5; 531; 591; 601; 630; 635; 644; 779; 869; 928; 939; and of Ov. Met. at vv. 20-4; 336-7; 866. For echoes of Trist., see vv. 303; 368; 696; for Pont., see vv. 305; 336; for A.A., see vv. 355-60; 570 ff.; 647; 662; for Am. see v. 709; for Fast. see v. 581; for Ov. Med., see v. 123 (and note).

Horace is also popular. These are likely echoes of his Odes in vv. 43; 62; 70; 72; 82-9; 85; 99-100(?); 226; 301-63; 331-4; 531; 595; 625; 629; 666.

For echoes of Verg., see vv. 46-6; 311-2; 374-5; 491; for Geor., see vv. 379; 694; 737; for Gal. see vv. 350-4(?). For Cat., see vv. 69; 72; 119; 226; 389; 410. For Lucri. see vv. 62; 289. For the Tib. Corpus, see
vv. 99-100; 673. For Pub. Syr. see vv. 153; 430. There may be echoes of
the early dramatists, though none is at all certain; see vv. 297-9; 451 for
Eun.; vv. 20 ff.; 176 for Acc.

There are clear reminiscences of Cic. Gat. in vv. 265; 266; 269-71. It
is likely that Seneca was influenced by various declaimers in v. 173; 306;
433-4; 1017.

In spite of his ingenuity in altering his models, Seneca is far too
dependent on them. He lacks the gift of a Vergil or Yeats for transmuting his
various sources into fresh and superb poetry. He is satisfied with nova
facies alone.

Imagery

Seneca's tragedies are rich in the quantity of their images and
figures of speech. However Seneca relies more on the repetition of well-
worked images to hammer home a point rather than conjure up new likenesses. It
is true that he does make a few striking innovations but these are almost all
intended to impress the audience with their wit rather than have the subtle
and evocative effect of a true poet's imagery.

Simile

This appears much less often in the tragedies than metaphor for it is a
quieter, less rhetorical figure. When simile does occur, Seneca often gives
a series of comparisons in quick succession, thus gaining force, sometimes
at the expense of clarity.

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1 Again Canter (pp. 100-35) is very useful. For imagery in the prose works,
see D. Steyns, Étude sur les Metaphores et les Comparaisons dans les
Oeuvres en Prose de Seneque le Philosophes (Grand, 1907).
The most "poetic" examples are found in the choruses. There is a pleasing group of similes in vv. 95-101. The Ganges tigress (vv. 263-5) is exotic enough and the simile is an interesting reworking of Ovid. Other examples are less successful. The maenas simile (vv. 382-4) is an impoverished treatment of a cliche and the sea-storm simile (vv. 940-2) is badly overdone.

There are certain other passages which are virtual similes though in them a person or thing is said to surpass those to which it is compared. Thus Creusa (vv. 76-81) and Jason (vv. 84-9) are said to surpass various patterns of beauty. There are also two passages (vv. 407-14; 579-90) where a woman's anger (explicitly Medea's in vv. 407-14) is said to surpass the most powerful natural forces. For this type of imagery, cf. vv. 940-2 and see examples under Metaphor B (3), (4) below.

Metaphor

The metaphors will be classified according to the sphere from which they are drawn and the more original examples will be pointed out.

A. Human Life

(1) Mind and Emotions. All examples are also instances of personification. Seneca's fondness for personification is no doubt due mainly to his rhetorical training, though it has a Stoic basis in the belief that the universe is an animate entity. Perhaps the most effective are "audacia ... carinas" (v. 607); "avidus ... ignis" (v. 885); "carinas ... querentes" (vv. 623-4). For other examples see vv. 6; 592-4; 941; 305; 942; 302.

(2) Body. Again almost all examples (except "lunatus" v. 178) involve personification. (a) parts: sana, v. 722; tympana, v. 212; verticem, v. 384.

(b) Functions and sensation. Here the frequent use of videre with a place-
name as subject is notable (vv. 44, 45, 146, 212). "Postusque ... a tergo videt" (v. 212) is a striking personification. For other examples see vv. 87, 431; 120, 431; 34-4; 627; 426; 176.

3) Sickness and Medicine. In view of the frequency of such images in the prose works and Seneca's frequent illnesses (see note on 433-4), it is surprising there are not more examples in the tragedies. (a) mental: sura, v. 825; inuer, v. 765; lyphastus, v. 336. (b) physical: exsue, vv. 592; 741; sura, v. 269; torpens, v. 348. This last example used of "lyra" is the most striking from this sphere. Note also the pejorative use of pestis, v. 355 and ius, v. 183 of persone. (c) medicine: xenium, v. 433.

4) Essential Needs: (a) shelter: planusta, v. 342; semen, v. 766 (for this unusual metaphor, see note ad. loc.). (b) drink: bibere, v. 772; haerere, v. 904 (see note ad. loc for the difference in the metaphorical uses of bibere and haerere); nota, v. 906. For the idiom in vv. 372-4, see Metonym (6).

(c) clothing: accipere, v. 51; inuer, v. 53, 751; sura, v. 281.

5) Social Needs: (a) religion: litae, v. 1029; semen, vv. 806, 849.

(c) art. The Stoics affected a contempt for art and there are few images from this sphere in the prose works or tragedies. See however on vv. 310; 743; 858-61. Art metaphors in Medea are artificius, v. 734; semen, v. 181, 977; pingere, v. 516. (c) amusement — the amphitheatre: praludere, v. 907; spectatior, v. 993; "tenetur; vulneri patuit locus" v. 550. Probably spectatior, v. 530 and aggregi, v. 565 are also metaphors from the amphitheatre. For a discussion of Seneca's attitude to the gladiatorial games, see on v. 894.

(7) Horsemanship: Seneca is fond of metaphors from the bridle: *premum*, vv. 3, 866; *latus*, v. 592; *effrons*, v. 103; *habanas*, v. 347. Note also *stilare*, v. 591; *stimulus*, v. 833.

(a) Commerce and Travel. (a) finance. As Coffey observes (see on v. 234) Seneca has a penchant for such imagery. Often more than one financial metaphor is present: *debar*, and *insinare*, v. 234; *prestitum*, v. 361 and *semen*, v. 363; *reddere*, v. 662 and *insinare*, v. 663. Note also *insinare*, v. 487; *constare*, v. 603; *consilare*, v. 907; *donare*, v. 1015. For the most part these metaphors, if not strikingly original, are pointed and effective in their context. (b) weights and measures: *librarium*, v. 401; *ponere*, v. 391. (c) travel: *exitus*, v. 614; *vacari*, v. 860; *via*, 40; 162; 307.

(9) Law and Politics: (a) Law: *advocare*, v. 562; *causa*, vv. 262; 866; *fons*, vv. 335; 606; *ius*, v. 615. *leas ex scribere*, vv. 319-20; *lex*, v. 365. There is also such legal language in vv. 192-202 and vv. 245-6, but it is not really metaphorical since Medea seems intent on turning her interview with Creon into legal proceedings. (b) punishment: *constrinxere*, v. 716 (a striking example); *vincula*, v. 376. (c) politics: *arbitus*, v. 400; *patera*, v. 400.

(10) Warfare: a rich source of imagery in Roman literature from Flautus on. In Medea we have *bellum*, v. 940; *avocare*, v. 705; *ausare*, vv. 859; 943; *occupare*, v. 890; *pode calcare*, v. 253; *provocare*, v. 616; *repugnare*, v. 294; *tela intendere*, v. 917; *vincere*, vv. 75; 437. Perhaps *imperium*, v. 767 and *reddere*, v. 768 also have a military connotation. *Vincere*, vv. 184, 491 is probably a dead metaphor.

(11) General (a mixed bag of rather well-worn metaphors that are not easy to classify): *acstringere*, v. 145; *sedere*, v. 989; *occidere*, vv. 561, 562;
exuvare, v. 49; incubare, v. 902; infuscare, v. 294; incipere, vv. 132, 236, 461; incubare, v. 397; obscurare, v. 207; pressare, vv. 159, 252, 462; revolvere, v. 466; verumare, v. 393.

B. Nature

(1) Animals: (a) domestic. granum, v. 96. This is a standard metaphor for clusters of stars (see note ad loc.). For other examples of imagery from livestock see Δ(6);(7) above. (b) wild. sursus, v. 636; securire, v. 136 serpens, v. 619.


(3) Fire. There is a wealth of imagery from this sphere, almost all of it (save v. 547) applied to Medea herself. The images are not very original but by their cumulative effect they forcibly symbolize Medea's passion. See on "aestuat" v. 390. Other examples: ascendero, v. 672; surdo, v. 582; clamare, v. 367; servare, v. 952; servidus, v. 558; flagrare, v. 858; ignis, v. 592; perurere, v. 547.

(4) Water. (a) sea. Medea is also characterized by the image of a stormy sea: aestuarum, v. 390 (see note); suspendero, v. 392; fluctus, v. 562; fluctus, v. 243. See also on "ex alto" v. 367. (b) other: offendero, v. 554; plundere, v. 119; 793; infundere, v. 946; mergere, v. 677.


(6) Night. nux, vv. 9; 464.

(7) Mountains: Caucanus, v. 43. See note for discussion of this bold rhetorical image.

(8) General: angustus, vv. 292; 1011.
Notonyy

Synecdoche (part for whole or vice versa) and transferred epithet differ so slightly from notonyy (name of one thing used for another to which it is closely related) that it is convenient to use the word "notonyy" to cover all these figures. 1

(1) part for whole. The examples in Medea are all conventional and do not merit listing in full. 2 The use of unda to express both mare (v. 491) and aqua (vv. 649; 667; 687) does lend rhetorical point to the latter lines. The repeated use of nymus for Medea emphasises her brutality (see especially vv. 123; 903; 952; 1009).

(2) whole for part. Apart from the special use listed in (a) below, examples in this class are few but effective: (a) general: Avenae, Albis, Ehenus (for their water) vv. 373-4; Ranaus (for the snow) v. 590; Oeta (for Hercules' pyre) v. 639. (b) genus for species: here the use of latter for two different liquids (water v. 80; blood v. 810) gives point to the latter passage. Note also pagonus for erivas v. 983. (c) first person plural for singular: See on v. 26 for a discussion of this usage, so common in the tragedies. Other examples: vv. 142; 167; 216; 242; 276; 414; 554; 556; 570; 575; 769; 806; 908; 1009.

(3) material for thing made of it: aera (vasa) v. 796; aurum (pellis aurea) v. 613; carpetta (vela) v. 319; corus (analis) vv. 126, 138; 167; 189; 264; 728; 809; 1006; 1013; lima (vela) v. 329; pinus (fex) v. 38; 111; pinus (navis) v. 336; truba (fex) v. 362. Of those the use of lima is the most

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1 Certain purely formal examples have been omitted.

2 See Carter (p. 123 ff.).
original (see note on v. 320). Again the use of the same word (pinus) with two meanings is suggestive.

(4) **Cause for effect**: artem (venenum) v. 575; _venenum_ (auxilium) v. 749.

(5) **Effect for cause**. The most striking example is the use of _prisun_ for Jason in v. 246. Also forceful are _tisor_ v. 361 and _rectus_ v. 516. More conventional are _fumus_ (aere) v. 45; _fata_ (cause of delay) vv. 33, 149; _pestis_ (poisonous objects) v. 720.

(6) **Emotion for holder of emotion**: _anor_ v. 416; _dolor_ v. 155; _ira_ v. 463; _spernae_ v. 253.

(7) **Place object or period of time for person or things occurring there**.

(a) **place**: _finem_ v. 185; _pharetra_ v. 710; _matio_ v. 312; _urbe_ v. 127. (b) **time**: _die_ vv. 223; 423; 424; 749; _idem_ v. 708.

(8) **Person or thing for thing signified**: _sax_ (muptiae) vv. 67, 398; _lar_ (domus) vv. 21, 224, 475; _mater_ (mother-love) v. 928; _penetas_ (domus) v. 450; _acenm_ (regnum) vv. 143; 252; 529-982; _taeda_ (muptiae) v. 581; _thalass_ (conilugum) vv. 53, 56, 218, 299, 443, 743, 1007; _tonus_ (astraconium) v. 1.

Also to be classed here is the _idem_ in vv. 372-4, where residence in a region is expressed in terms of drinking the water of the main river of that region.

(9) **Transferred epithet**: (a) **adjectives appropriate to the concrete applied to associated abstracts**: _dehilia_ v. 258; _mudificus_ v. 714; _semita_ v. 54. (b) **adjectives appropriate to possessor transferred to object possessed**: _fallax_ (ignis) v. 658; _polidina_ (remus) v. 608. (c) **adjectives appropriate to a person in the grip of emotion transferred to the part of the bodily action most affected**: _attonitus_ v. 675; _obriva_ v. 69; _aurora_ v. 864; _inytus_ v. 104; _superius_ vv. 205, 253; _venamum_ v. 738.
This play is concerned above all with the questions of order and chaos, control and unrestraint in Medea's own soul and the universe as a whole. Much of the imagery is concerned with these issues. Metaphors from the bridle and from law and punishment are used to express control. Note also iugar, v. 447, and gnomus v. 342. However most of these images are "negative" in that they express the absence of control, the destruction of control or the need for control.\(^1\) The dominant images representing unrestraint are fire and stormy-sea,\(^2\) and they are often blended to emphasize the violence of Medea's passion (e.g. vv. 397-92; 408-14; 579-82; 942). Such figurative uses are reinforced and given deeper significance by the non-figurative uses.\(^3\) Even the apparently "happy" uses of lax v. 67, and pines, v. 110 have been coloured by the use of the words in vv. 15 and 38, and the dominance of the destructive aspect of fire is made clear in vv. 836-9.

Fire and sea play important parts in the legend of the Argonauts and Seneca here too has emphasized their destructive aspects. The motif of fire is stressed in connection with Acestes' bulls (vv. 241; 460-6), the murder of Pelias (vv. 134, 475-6, 666), the burning of Creon, his daughter and palace (vv. 880; 885-6), and the final preparations for the destruction of Creusa

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1. An exception is the use of *constringere*, v. 716. *Locus sordidus* is only an apparent exception since "sordidus" has a pejorative ring.


3. See Pratt, *op. cit.* p. 214 for lists of these uses.
(vv. 617 ff.)

There is little trace in *Medea* of the Stoic doctrine of divine fire. There are however several clear references to the brightness and purity of the stars (e.g. vv. 30; 402; 1026). Indeed throughout the play there is repeated contrast between light (especially associated with the heavens the Olympians and Grouse) and darkness (usually of Medea and the Cithonian deities). This alternation in imagery is particularly noticeable in the prologue.

Apart from Abystus' murder on the sea (vv. 132-3), the emphasis on the sea's violence is particularly strong because it seeks vengeance for the Argo's voyage (see vv. 607-69). The Third Chorus implies that Medea is the instrument of the sea's further vengeance. Pratt, *op. cit.*, p. 216, thinks "Seneca is headed toward intellectual difficulty, for Medea is thus aligned with natural order and stability". But the inconsistency is illusory. The Argo's voyage has upset the natural order of the universe and the sea has become a symbol of uncontrolled violence.

In most plays the role of effective symbolism is to present alternatives or images in counterpart to the explicit action and symbolism that says the same thing as the action is impotent and otiose. In *Medea* however action is relatively unimportant. Behind Seneca's words lies not action but dolor, furore and impietatem. The identification of these affectus with fire and stormy-sea gives them the aggressiveness and permanence of those violent elements. Thus to a certain extent symbolism takes the place of action.

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1 See Pratt, *op. cit.* p. 216.
Conclusion

It is quite clear that Seneca's tragedies are overwhelmingly rhetorical in cast. The constant attempt to amaze the audience becomes wearisome. It leads to lack of balance in plot-construction (cf. vv. 670-682), to the subservience of common-sense to sentiment and makes many of Seneca's attempts at dignity appear ridiculous. Indeed, asserts T.S. Eliot. 1 "In the plays of Seneca, the drama is all in the word, and the word has no further reality behind it". This is a little unfair; true, Seneca's words do not reflect action, but behind them lie strong emotions that emerge in the cruelty and cold-bloodedness of the plays and in the very violence and ostentation of the rhetoric. Language then has not for Seneca degenerated into the play-thing it becomes for the Flavian epic poets. Unfortunately Seneca's rhetoric is usually a frenetic symptom of unease rather than an attempt to express and clarify the emotion. Too much should not be claimed for Seneca's tragedies. Yet for those who love wit and eloquence and can be amused rather than repelled by rhetorical excess, Medea has much to offer. In addition, the reader will be surprised by passages of delicate poetry in the choruses (e.g. vv. 75-82) and with glimpses of an intense imagination (e.g. vv. 714-9).

CHAPTER TWO

The Prologue (vv. 1-55)

Medea enters and begins her opening monologue. We are immediately presented with a furious woman, thirsting for revenge and ready to use any means to attain it. Like most of Seneca's prologues, that of Medea does not reveal the time and place of the action, nor does it seek to help the audience understand the plot by giving relevant background information. Indeed no direct reason is given for Medea's outburst.

Euripides' Medea begins quite differently. There, the Nurse reminds the audience of Medea's past adventures and indicates her present plight. But, whereas the story of Euripides' play was unfamiliar to his audience and perhaps was largely invented by him (cf. D. Page, Euripides Medea (Oxford, 1938), p. 20:21), Medea's deeds at Corinth must have been very well-known to all educated Romans of Seneca's day.1 Seneca, therefore assumes this knowledge in his audience and uses the prologue to introduce the frenzied character of his Medea.

This presentation of Medea in full frenzy at the outset tends to rob her later outbursts of much of their effectiveness. Aniker2 attempts to defend Seneca by quoting from de Irae 3, 1, 3: "Cetera enim affectus dilationes recipiunt et curari tardius prosusunt, huius (irae) incitata et se ipsa rapientia violentia non paulatim procedit, sed dum incipit tota est". However good psychological observation is not necessarily good dramatic

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1 Seneca was not catering to a Timonalecho (Petr. 50; 52) or a Calvisius Sabinus (ep. 27, 5-6).

technique.

Others\(^1\) have made an even more serious objection to the prologue — they have felt that in it Medea herself reveals the details of her plans for revenge and that thus there is a conflict with the main body of the play, where she does not decide on the child-murder until v. 917 ff. These critics underestimate the subtlety and sophistication of Seneca's attitude to his audience. Gronov was more perceptive: "at arca est Poetae iubentis esse adhac ignarum imprudentesque et necessum intelligentem, quid omittatur, etiam nomium ipsae verbis hoc sensum imponat.\(^2\) Using the audience's knowledge, Seneca puts into Medea's mouth words that for her have a straightforward meaning,\(^3\) but for the audience foreshadow her acts of vengeance: "poperi" (v. 26); "promubam pinum" (vv. 37-8); "sacrificas precas" (v. 38); "caedem victimas" (v. 39); "per viscera" (v. 40). Similar double-entendres occur elsewhere in the play. These ominous hints demand the close attention of the audience;\(^4\) Seneca wins the listeners' jaded ears for his well-known tale.

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\(^2\) \textit{L. Annaei Senecae Tragediae} (Leyden, 1861), note ad. loc.

\(^3\) Though perhaps Seneca intended us to think of the idea as gradually emerging from her unconscious mind; cf. vv. 550; 917 ff.

by subtly flattering their learning and persuading them to thrill with
pleasurable anticipation at each half-disguised reference to the catastrophe.

The **double-entendres** would have both a dramatic and an immediate
rhetorical effect. Seneca here as in all his longer speeches employs many
of the other technical devices favoured by the declaimers of the day. We
find entreaties (e.g. vv. 1-19; 20-5; 32-6), with their inevitable apostrophes
(e.g. vv. 1-12; 41), sudden transitions (e.g. vv. 25; 26), dramatic questions
(e.g. vv. 26-31), climax (vv. 20; 45), antithesis (e.g. v. 55), paronomasia
(e.g. vv. 26-9; 29-30) and extravagant use of metaphor (v. 43). Such figures
of expression as anaphora, chiasmus and asyndeton are also used freely. The
prologue might have been improved by pruning, yet its nagging, insistent
rhetoric does match Medea's restless and violent personality.

1-16. Medea invokes the powers of heaven and the Underworld to destroy
Creon and his daughter. There is no comparable invocation in E. Med.; though
Medea in a brief prayer to Thetis and Artemis (v. 160 ff.) does ask that
Jason and his bride be destroyed. There are traces of Ovid's influence in
vv. 5-8. The gods invoked are carefully chosen to hint at Medea's previous
history and at her powerful connections with the different regions of the
world.

1-4. These first four lines are scanned alike. Further in each the pen-
ultimate word contains four syllables and the last word two syllables. Note
also that the syllable do - occurs in the same position of vv. 2-4. Such
regularity lends the lines solemnity.

1. *di coniugales*: immediately suggests to the knowledgeable audience, the
cause of Medea's wrath. Cf. "soror Titantis", KP v. 1. It is likely that
Jupiter and Juno are meant. The Greeks regarded Zeus and Hera as the tutelary gods of marriage and Plutarch (Quaest. Rom. 2, 264) names them first in his list of Roman marriage gods. There may be a deliberate recollection of A.R. 4, 95 ff., where Jason swore to marry Medea, by Zeus and Hera, goddess of marriage. genialis tori: the nuptial couch dedicated to the genii of a married couple and placed in the atrium. Note the peculiar sound effect gained by the repetition in a different order in the second part of the line of most of the consonants used in the first part.

2. Lucina: a minor deity, connected with childbirth, who was early assimilated by Juno. Later, influenced by the Greek conflation of Ilithyia with Artemis, the Romans identified Lucina and Juno Lucina with Diana (cf. Cat. 34, 13-4). In v. 61; Ag. v. 346 Lucina is clearly to be identified with Diana. quaeque etc.: Pallas Athene, who helped build Argo (cf. vv. 365-7) and taught Tiphys the arts of seamanship (A.R. 1, 109). domituras: a well-worn metaphor but interesting because of the prominence in Med. of the ideas of restraint and unrestraint. Cf. "frenare", v. 3. The sea has been tamed (cf. vv. 364-5), but not Medea's spirit (v. 506); ships can be controlled, but "frenare nescit iras/ Medea, non amores" (vv. 866-7).

3. Timyn: the steersman of the Argo. Cf. vv. 318-28; 616-24. novem: Argo was commonly regarded as the first sea-going ship. *frenare*: Seneca is fond of metaphors from the bridle; see p. 37 above for other examples.

1 Cf. schol. on A.R. 1, 4. Most Roman poets who write on the Argonauts introduce this motif (e.g. Cat. 64, 11; Ov. Met. 6, 721; Manil. 1, 412). Cf. also v. 318 ff.
4. Periphrasis for Neptune. 

**dominator**: occurs only twice in classical Latin outside Seneca's poetry, where it is found five times in the tragedies and also in Seneca's translation of Cleanthes (Ep. 107, 11), the first three lines of which merit quotation here:

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duc, o parens, celsique dominator poli
quosumque placuit: nulla parendi mora est
adsum impiger, fac nolle.
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Summers (Select Letters, p. 333) comments, "It is interesting to compare the style of these iambics with those of the Senecan Tragedies: with the first line, cf. Med. 4 ..., Phaed. 1159 ..., with the second, HP 1171 "nulla pugnandi mora est", with the third, Phoen. 200, "velle fac." Note also that the first line of this translation is scanned in the same way as Med. v. 4.

5. **Titan**: i.e. the sun, offspring of the Titan Hyperion - a common use in Ovid and the tragedies.

7. **Hecate triformis**: Hecate was identified with Diana on earth, and Luna above (cf. v. 751; Phaed. v. 412). Here she is invoked in her capacity as Luna, for the moon played an important part in the magical practices associated with Hecate (cf. v. 787 ff.).

7-8. *quoque iuravit mihi/ deos Jason*: probably Seneca has in mind two passages in Ovid, where Jason swore to Medea by the sun, by the "triple goddess" and with a vague comprehensive phrase (Met. 7, 94 ff.; Her. 12, 77-80). Such general phrases were conventional in prayers, to avoid misnaming a deity (cf. Cat. 34, 21). *quoque Medaece etc.*: for Medea is a witch and the powers now named were commonly invoked in magic (cf. v. 740 ff.). Note the chiastic structure of vv. 5-12.
9. *noctis aeternae chaos*: cf. v. 741, "chaos caecum", where as often chaos is invoked in magical practices (cf. Verg. Aen. 4, 510; Luc. 6, 696). It is often regarded as a vague power in the Underworld or identified with the Underworld *aeternae*: also an epithet of *nox* in *Med.* v. 464; Verg. *Georg.* 1, 468; *Aen.* 10, 746. The same phrase as in *HF* v. 610.


11-2. *licet meliora*: Proserpina had been carried off by Pluto but was made his queen (cf. Ov. *Met.* 5, 359-424). *raptae*: implies, quite falsely that Medea had left against her will.

13-8. The review of Medea's past career, which lies behind vv. 1-12, culminates in an overwhelming desire for revenge and her invocation of the Furies.

The Furies (Allecto, Tisiphone, Megaera) had become a rather hackneyed theme in Roman poetry; Ovid had been particularly fond of them. Since revenge is so prominent a motif in Seneca, the Furies make frequent appearances — rather like aging chorus-girls, a little weary and rather jaded, who nonetheless troop gaily on to the stage when the theme-tune is played. Seneca attempts to give his Fury passages variety by niggling changes in detail.

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1 Cf. Miller, 2, 523.
Here Seneca probably intends the Furies to help characterize Medea's anger. Seneca's description (de Ira 2, 35, 5) of the true face of anger is very relevant: "qualia poetae inferna monstra fìmerunt succinctora serpentibus et igneo flatu, quales ad bella excitanda discordiansque in populos dividendam paenique lacerandam teterainse infernum exunt; talen nobis iram figuressus."¹
gcularis ultrices deca; cf. v. 967; Oct. v. 966. The aculn Medea has in mind is of course her desertion by Jason. When they respond (v. 958 ff.), they have come ostensibly to avenge Absyrtus, but by goading Medea to the child-murder, Jason is punished. See v. 958 ff. ma ma: coniunctio. See p. 32.

14. crinem ... serpentibus: Paus. (1, 28, 6) asserts that Aeschylus (Ch. v. 1050) was the first to represent the Furies with snakes in their hair. Roman poets frequently introduce this detail, sometimes stating that the Furies have snakes tangled in their hair (e.g. Ov. Met. 4, 453), on one occasion (Tib. 1, 3, 69) that they have snakes instead of hair, but generally, as in the present passage, leaving this point in doubt. solutis: a skilfully chosen word. solvo is so often used of hair,² that "serpentibus" is grimly unexpected, yet it aptly suggests the uncontrolled writhing of snakes. squalidas: also used of Furies in Ag. v. 759: "scorces squalidas" and No v. 1004, "temporibus ... squalidas". In No v. 1234 it is used of a snake. Notice the hissing effect given this line by the alliteration of s.

15. atum ... facem: the Furies traditionally carried torches. atum is in Seneca and elsewhere a common epithet of things infernal and thus sometimes,

¹The elaborate picture of anger that follows the quoted words, is well exemplified by Medea's behaviour throughout the play.

²Cf. v. 752; HP v. 202; Oct. v. 262.
as here, is even applied to light. The apparent contradiction is emphasized by the postponement of "facer" to the end of the line. *sventis manibus*; another commonly mentioned feature of the Furies' appearance, the blood symbolizing their function as avengers.

16-17. The idea of the Furies presiding over a wedding in place of the usual wedding gods, is a favourite conceit of Ovid and occurs several times in Seneca's tragedies and in *Oct.* This conceit was perhaps suggested by the fact that Furies carried torches and torches were carried at a wedding. Medea's assertion that the Furies were present at her wedding, while clearly a rhetorical statement of the unhappy fate of her marriage, does have some basis; after the murder of Absyrtus, the Furies had pursued Medea and though *A.R.* declares that Circe had purified her before the wedding in Phaeacia, Seneca clearly does not adopt this version (cf. v. 956 ff.).

17. *comiugi:* the daughter of Creon, called Creusa by Seneca (vv. 495, 508, 817, 921). For the line-ending cf. *Ag.* v. 749: "comiugi manus novae."

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2 E.g. *Ag.* v. 82; *Oct.* v. 594.

3 Cf. v. 37; *Od* vv. 671-2; *Oct.* vv. 24; 262; 593 ff.; 722; Ov. *Her.* 2, 117-27; 6, 95-6; 11, 101-6; *Herc.* 6, 426-32; *Cul.* v. 246; Luc. 8, 90; Stat. *Theb.* 4, 153; 11, 491; Val *Fl.* 2, 173; Claud. *Epist.* *Prop.* v. 40; *Huf.* 1, 83. Note also Liv. 30, 13, 12, though there the bride is termed a Fury.

4 4, 559-60; 700-17.

5 Not named by *Euripides*. *Paus.* (2, 3, 6) calls her Glauce, others (e.g. *Hyl. F.* 25), Creusa.
18. *secreto*: Creon, King of Corinth. In 17-18, note the anaphora with "letum" and the chiasmus.

19-26. Medea prays that Jason may live on in miserable exile and be punished through his children.

19. *mihi*: emphatic. The implication is that Medea is more terrible than the Furies. *sposo*: Jason. *malum*: note omission of *est*. It is also omitted in finite sentences in vv. 579, 604.1

20. *vivat*: the idea that in certain circumstances, death is preferable to life is frequently found in the tragedies of Seneca. It finds very similar expression in *Phoen.* v. 319: "inbente te vel vivat." Probably in the present passage, Seneca has in mind Ov. *Herc.* 6, 164: "vivite, devoto nuptaque virisque tore," and with deliberate irony puts into Medea's mouth a similar prayer to that uttered by the vengeful Hypsipyle, whom Jason had deserted for Medea.

20-21. Cf. Acc. Med. frg. 415 (B): "exul inter hostes, exapes, expers, desertus, vagenus." However in view of Seneca's disparagement of the early Roman dramatists,2 it is perhaps more likely that he is thinking here too of Ov. *Herc.* 6, 158: "exulet et toto quaerat in orbe fugam," and 162: "erret, inops, expers," where Hypsipyle is praying that misfortune may befall Medea. Note the enumerative *asyneton* in these lines; *asyneton* is very common in

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1 A stop is preferable to Thomann’s comma after "date" (v. 18); with the latter punctuation, "mihi" (v. 19) is very weak. Leo omends to "manet" – unnecessarily in view of the examples of the omission of *est* he provides (1, 190).

2 Cf. Gell. 12, 2.
Medea, as indeed in all of Seneca's tragedies.

21. incerti laris: lar is frequently used, by metonymy, to mean "home" in both poetry and prose, (cf. vv. 224; 478 and the use of "Penatibus" in v. 450). This prayer makes Medea's plea to Jason, "per ... certum larem" (v. 478) all the more ironic. Medea's references to a settled home (cf. also "fido lare", v. 294) reflect a wistful recognition of all she has lost by leaving Colchis (e.g. v. 207 ff.).

22. iam notus hospes: reference to the past as well as the future; Corinth was by no means the first place at which Jason had sought hospitality.

24. liberae similis patri: cf. "patrique Orestes similis" (Ag. v. 196). It was traditional at weddings to wish for a son who resembled his father (cf. Cat. 61, 214): "sit suo similis patri". Perhaps when Seneca wrote the present passage, he had in mind, Ov. Her. 6, 123-4: "si quaeris, cui sint similis, cognosceris illis/ fallere non corunt; oetera patris habent."

25. matri: perhaps Aniker (p. 36) is right, when he suggests that Medea thinks first of Creusa, but then suddenly sees the relevance of her remark to herself and expresses this in "parta ... peperi."

25-26. partes ... peperi: a pun on the literal and metaphorical meanings of parce. With "peperi", the audience naturally thinks of the murder of the children, but Medea need mean only that Jason's worst punishment would be to have treacherous and murderous children. Note the repetition of p in vv. 24-26, the anaphora and jingle in "similis patri/ similisque matri" and the conduplicatio in "parta ... parta". Note echo in "peperi" (v. 957).

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1 The elder Seneca refers to this type of paronomasia as being overused in his own day: "nullus vitii quod ex captione unius verbi plurum significantis nascitur" (Contr. 7, 3, 9).
26-36. After the striking climax of "peperi", a new beginning must be made. Medea goads herself to action, but action does not immediately result. Instead, more extravagant rhetoric follows. Anlker (p. 43) has pointed out the connections linking the thoughts which flash through Medea's mind with such bewildering rapidity. First she threatens to snatch the torches from the hands of the wedding-guests; this suggests the grandiose idea of snatching the "torch" from heaven - a feat she was quite capable of performing (cf. vv. 673-4). It suddenly strikes her as deplorable that her ancestor, the Sun, has not already removed the spectacle of her mistreatment by returning home in his chariot. Her bitterness leads her to demand the Sun's chariot for herself that she might destroy Corinth in a mighty fire like that Phaethon caused. A similar "stream of consciousness" technique is used frequently in the longer speeches. For interesting examples cf. vv. 135 ff.; 397 ff.

The material in these lines has been culled from a variety of sources, yet their style and tone is Seneca's own. Here as elsewhere Seneca seems to be putting into practice the views expressed in Ep. 84, 5.

26. sero: from sero (satum) rather than sero (sartum). The metaphor is a common one; cf. Phaed. v. 494; Ep. 104, 12 and see Ls. a. I sero II.

26-30: notice the alliteration in these lines (first with s, then with g, then again with g and p) and the short questions in vv. 26-27, 30-31.

27. Perhaps here (as in vv. 157; 593) Seneca has in mind Ov. Her. 12, 155, "ire animus medias suadebat in agmina turbae". feceo: the torches carried in the wedding procession. spectat ... / spectatur: cf. vv. 218-9, for a similar example of paronomasia. For the idea of "watching" see on vv.
992-4. aitor: the sun was Medea's grandfather.

29-31. Medea is thinking of the Thyestes story where the sun returned home at the sight of the terrible feast (cf. Thy. vv. 776-7; 784-5; 789 ff.; 892 ff.; 990 ff.; 1035; 1095-6). Note though that this motif also occurs in Ovid's version of the Phaethon story (Met. 2, 329-31); see on vv. 32-4.

Note also Phaed. vv. 678-9. currus... decurrit: emphasis is given the paronomasia by the fact that the words occupy a similar line-position.

32. da, da: another example of conduplicatio to convey excitement.

32-4: an allusion to the Phaethon story (Ov. Met. 2, 1-323. Cf. also vv. 599-602. Her demand for the chariot foreshadows her escape at the end of the play in her dragon-chariots (given her by the sun, according to E. Med. vv. 1321-2). Phaethon's fire had destroyed great cities (Ov. Met. 2, 214-6). Note the stress on fire in "flagrantibus/ ignifera", and the clear foreshadowing (vv. 35-6) of the fire that destroys the palace and threatens the whole city (vv. 885-7). ignifera: for adjectives in -fer and -fer, see p.

35. opponens moras: Summers (Select Letters, p. 278) comments: "Allusions to the geography of the Isthmus are popular with the Latin poets (and esp. common in Sen.'s tragedies)." Kingery (p. 269) refers to Nero's abortive attempt to have a canal cut across the Isthmus (Suet. Ner. 19).

37-55. After referring in ambiguous language to certain ceremonies connected with the new marriage (vv. 37-40), Medea urges herself to oust all her earlier misdeeds.

37. Medea returns to the starting-point of her demand for the sun-chariot - the wedding torches (cf. v. 27). hoc restat unus: Medea probably uses the phrase sarcastically (cf. v. 498), but the audience would also understand it

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1 E.g. Phaed. v. 1024; Thy. vv. 628-9.
as a straightforward statement of intent, when it perceived the double-
entendres in the following lines. Pratt (Dramatic Suspense, p. 67) is
surely wrong in feeling that Medea is here contemplating acquiescence.
37-8. promunam ... pines: as in Cir. v. 439, the wedding pine-torch. The
audience will think of Medea as a "do-it-yourself" Fury (see on vv. 16-7).
The destructive fire is again foreshadowed.
38. sacrificae process: part of the marriage ceremony, but also fore-
shadowing Medea's sorcery.
39. victims: on Medea's part, another reference to the wedding sacrifices;
the audience will think of Creon, Creusa and the children (cf. the use in
v. 970). For a similar play on the literal and metaphorical uses, cf. 40
v. 348: "ne nuptiali victimam feriat dies." dicatis ... altaribus: would
suggest Medea's magic rites.
39-42. Note alliteration of v.
40. per viscera ipsa: another striking double-entendre. The audience will
think of the child-murder. Medea's train of thought switches from the
sacrificial victims, who would be disembowelled, to the idea of running the
sword through her enemies' entrails (cf. E. Med. v. 379). Note the
repetition of "viscera" in v. 1013.
41. si vivas, anime: for such exhortations to the soul, or the emotion felt,
see pp. 30-1; they are very common in the tragedies. Braddy (p. 78) observes
that they accord with Seneca's acceptance (cf. Ep. 92, 1) of Poseidonius' 
doctrine of the divided soul. However such apostrophes were favoured by the

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1 For viscera meaning "children", cf. Ag. v. 27; Ov. Nat. 6, 651; 8, 478; 10, 465.
claimers, and their prevalence in the tragedies is due to this rhetorical influence.

43. *Causasum mente induc*; a bold metaphor. *induere* is frequently used with abstract nouns but here "Causasum" stands for "harsh cruelty". The expression is given point by the fact that Medea came from that region; she is to return to type. The construction is aided by the explanatory "mente"; cf. "indue mente patrem" (Claud. *III. Cone. Mon.* v. 157). *inhospitalam* is a Horatian touch; cf. Od. 1, 22, 6; *Phaed.* 1, 12. The idea stems from the wildness of the mountains (cf. Verg. *Aen.* 4, 367) and the alleged barbarity of the people of that region (cf. *Tro.* v. 1104; *Phaed.* v. 906).

44. *Pontus ..., Phasis*: Medea had helped kill her brother in the Ister near the Black Sea (according to A.R. 4, 467), and at Colchis near the river Phasis, she had betrayed her father (cf. Ov. *Herc.* 6, 135) and helped Jason steal the golden fleece (cf. *Med.* v. 912). See also on "inhospitalam" (v. 43).

44-45. *vidit ..., videbit*: this use of *video* of places is very common in Seneca. *videbit Isthmus*: strongly emphasized by its position.

45-46. Note, again the use of asyndeton with adjectives to help convey intensity of emotion. Cf. vv. 20-1.

46. *tremenda caelo pariter ac terris mala*: not necessarily hyperbole, cf. v. 739.

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1 E.g. "dura, anime, dura; heri fortior eras", (Sen. *Contr.* 2, 3, 1).

2 E.g. on vv. 148; 212; 756.
46-48: surely in these lines, Seneca has in mind Verg. *Aen.* 6, 724-7:

"Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentes

.................................

spiritus intus alit; totamque infusa per artus

totamque artus infusa; totamque 

mens agitat molem."

The phrases underlined above occur in Seneca with but little alteration. Perhaps Seneca's reminiscences have a deliberate purpose and Medea is meant to personify the forces that work in opposition to Anchises' divine "mens" — unreason, passion, violence.

47-48. *vagus/ funus per artus*: vividly evokes the dismemberment of Absyrtus and Pelias. ¹ *funus*: "tomb", is frequently used in poetry to express a violent death, but in the present context the metaphor is still forcible.

49. *Ag.* v. 124 is rather similar, "soror ists fecit; te deset maior nefas", but there two people are involved.

50. There are many cases in the tragedies, where as here characters look forward to committing a crime with a certain pleasure, ² and seem to revel in their own evil. As the imaginary objector in *de Ira* puts it, "ira habet aliquam voluptatem et dulce est dolorem reddere" (2, 32, 1). Medea in her pain is here concerned to emphasize her power to harm in the future by dwelling on her past misdeeds. Yet her attitude to these earlier acts is ambivalent; later, she claims that her motive was to save Jason (vv. 136; 236-41) with his comrades (vv. 225-33), and that Jason must share responsibility for her

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¹ Cf. on vv. 131; 133-4.

² Cf. Herrmann, p. 491.
crimes (vv. 500-501: "tua illa, tua sunt illa; cui prodest scelus/ is fecit").

52-5. Note the sharp antitheses, "repudia thalamie", "linques ... secutas", "scelere parta ... scelere linquenda".

54. \textit{rumpere ... semes morae}: perhaps an echo of Verg. Geor. 3, 42-3. \textit{Mora} \textit{rumpere} is a common metaphor; see LS.s. \textit{mora IA}; \textit{rumpo} II.

55. Another \textit{double-entendre}, for the line is applicable to Creusa's marriage as well as to Medea's.

\textbf{First Chorus (vv. 56-115)}

After the wild threats of Medea, there is a sudden change of atmosphere. The chorus of Corinthians (their sex is uncertain) sings a joyful wedding-song in honour of Jason and Creusa; unlike Euripides' chorus, that of Seneca is hostile to Medea (cf. vv. 102-4; 114-5).

Seneca has clearly been influenced by the traditions of wedding-poetry and its earlier expressions, \textsuperscript{1} but it was probably Ovid's influence that led him to include such a chorus in his tragedy. There is no trace of a wedding-song in \textit{E. Med.}, for the marriage has taken place before that play begins. However Ovid introduces this motif into \textit{Hex.} 12, 137 ff. (Medea's letter to Jason) and there are several reminiscences of this passage in Sen. \textit{Med.} (see on vv. 27; 116; 117; 157; 593). \textsuperscript{2} Seneca has however used a wide range of sources for the details of his chorus. On the whole these borrowings are

\textsuperscript{1} See A.L. Wheeler, \textit{Cal.ulus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry} (Berkeley, 1934), pp. 183-217, for a good discussion of the genre.

\textsuperscript{2} F. Leo (1, 169) suggests that this theme in the letter was elaborated in \textit{Ov. Med.}, and that Seneca is here following the lost play. He may be right, but such speculation is fruitless.
not obtrusive and Seneca blends them into pleasing poetry.

Like Catullus (in 61, 62), Seneca has blended Greek and Roman wedding traditions, though, since both areas shared many wedding customs, one should not be too dogmatic in differentiating between them. Clearly Roman however is the reference to the Fescennine verses (v. 113). The praise of Hymenaeus as the god of lawful marriage (v. 67), the encomium of the bride and groom and the ἐκφρασις of the bride are among the standard themes of Hellenistic epideictic rhetoric.¹

E.A. Mangelsdorf² (supported by C.K. Kapnukajas³) pointed to vv. 105, 107, 108, as evidence that Seneca viewed this wedding song as being sung directly before the deductio. It is true that at Roman weddings the bridegroom clasped the bride’s hand just before the procession and that at this time too the Fescennine verses were uttered. However in both Greek and Roman weddings, the procession to the bridegroom’s house took place after the wedding feast at the house of the bride’s father. But it is clear that when Creon (vv. 299-300) declares, "sacra me thalami vocat/ vocat precari festus Hymenaeo dies", the ceremonies before the deductio are still taking place. Further, vv. 879-886 reveal that the bride and her father have perished in the royal palace. It seems therefore better to reject the idea of a deductio here. This song, while a part of the wedding celebrations, (cf. Medea’s

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² *Das lyrische Hochzeitsleid bei den Griechen und Romern* (Diss. Giessen, 1913), p. 44 ff.

reaction in v. 116) is a general tribute to the occasion, and it is futile to attempt to synchronize the traditional features mentioned here with the actual performance of these details at this wedding.  

The calm and happy chorus provides a striking change of atmosphere after Medea's wild ranting. The contrast is intensified by the fact that the chorus invokes the gods of marriage whom Medea herself had invoked to punish the wreckers of her own marriage. The illusory nature of the chorus' picture of happiness is emphasized by the repetition later in the play, in a grim context, of various motifs and phrases found here. See note on vv. 849-78, and cf. "latex ... sacer" (vv. 849-78) with "sacrum laticem" (v. 810); "tripodas movet" (v. 86) with "tripodas ... commotos" (vv. 785-6); the moon and its "solidum ... orbem" (vv. 97-8) with the picture in vv. 787-90.

The chorus begins in asclepiads (vv. 56-74), moves to glyconics (vv. 75-92), returns to asclepiads (vv. 93-109) and ends with hexameters (vv. 110-5).

56. regum: Jason and Creusa. The masculine plural is sometimes used with reference to a married couple; cf. "Tonantibus" (v. 59); "soceris" (v. 106). Servius "auctus" comments on Verg. Aen. 2, 457. "meliori sexui respondit, id est masculino".

57. Cf. vv. 4, 5 where Neptune and Sol are invoked by Medea.

58. rite faeantibus: "rebusque divinis, quae publice fierent ut 'faverent linguis' imperabatur" (Cic. Div. 1, 102). In practice this came to mean a

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2 Cf. Pratt, Dramatic Suspense, p. 69.
solemn silence. Cf. Hor. Od. 3, 1, 2; Verg. Aen. 5, 71.

59-66: subtle and suggestive lines. "Tonantibus" (v. 59) corresponds to "di coniugales" (v. 1) and note the repetition of Lucina (v. 2; 62). The lines contain veiled references to Medea's revenge. Behind the bull to be sacrificed "sceptriferis ... Tonantibus" (v. 59) we may perhaps detect Creon, "sceptro impotens" (v. 143). The "nivei femina corporis/ intentata iugo" certainly suggests the virgin (v. 105), Creusa, with her "femineo ... choros" (v. 93) and "niveus color" (v. 99). "Tenera ... hostis" forebodes the child-murder. Note also the use of placare in vv. 62; 971 and of victima in vv. 39; 970.

59. sceptriferis Tonantibus: Juno is also regarded as sceptrifer in Ag. v. 348; Ho v. 1509. Strictly, only Jove was Tonans (for the present idiom see on "regum", v. 56), but Juno is associated with the thunderbolt in Ho v. 880; 1510.

60. taurus: Serv. (on Verg. Aen. 3, 21) and Macrobi. (Sat. 3, 10, 3) assert that heifers not bulls should be sacrificed to Jupiter. But cf. Ov. Met. 4, 756: "taurus tibi, summe deorum".

61. Lucina: in view of v. 59, to be identified with Diana. Kingery is surely wrong in identifying Lucina here and in v. 2 with Juno (pp. 267, 270).

1 For a precedent for the allegorical use of a bull and white cow, see Ov. Aen. 3, 5.

2 As Kapnukajas (p. 93) points out, because of her earlier identification with Juno, Lucina receives as her victim a white cow, even when she is identified with Diana.
Plut. (Quaest. Roman 264) declares that Artemis was one of the five marriage gods of the Romans.

62-5. Here we have an interesting example of Seneca's imitative technique. In v. 62 we have an echo of Hor. Od. 1, 5 with overtones of the lovely Pyrrha. In v. 62, there is a brief but unmistakable suggestion of Lucretius' Venus, before Pax emerges, complete with cornucopia.

62. intemptata: cf. Hor. Od. 1, 5, 13. et aspera: cf. Hor. Od. 1, 5, 6. Further, this line recalls Horace's verse-technique in that the end of the line and the end of the clause do not coincide. intemptata iu6go: probably a double-entendre. In one sense the phrase echoes A.R. 4, 1186 where the Phaeacian peasants sacrifice "εὐρήκαταν ... πότιν" after the marriage of Medea and Jason. But the phrase can also bear a sexual meaning that is also applicable to Creusa. et asperi ... copiam: description of Pax. Kingery (p. 277) observes that she is pictured with this cornu copiae on coins of Augustus and Vespasian. For Peace as a marriage-god, cf. Ar. Pax v. 974. Note again Seneca's love of periphrasis; examples in this chorus and in the play as a whole are too frequent to bear further comment.

63-4: an echo of Incr. 1, 31 ff.

63. sanguinas quae cohibet manus: but the audience will remember "cruentis manibus" (v. 15).

67-70. Hymenaeus is invoked.

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1 The description of Pax is probably based on Ov. Met. 9, 88, but the existence of two quite similar passages in Horace (Od. 1, 17, 14-6; C.S. v. 59 ff.) warns against excessive dogmatism in identifying Seneca's sources.
67. faciōs legitimis: cf. Cat. 61, 44-5; 61-4, but "facibus" might recall the Furies "facem" (v. 15).
68. noctem dissutiens: but cf. "noctis aeternae chaos" (v. 9). suspice dextra: the Romans generally considered the right hand lucky. Here a further point is that the torch burning in the right hand was a sign of luck, but if it were extinguished, of ill-luck (cf. Ov. Met. 10, 4 ff.).
69. hic incedes: cf. Cat. 61, 9-10, where there is also a participle in association with the imperative. gradus marcidus ebrici: in Cat. 61, 1-15, there is no suggestion of drunkenness, but Seneca regards Hymenaeus as the son of Baccus (v. 110) and has given the son the attributes of the father.
70: based on Hor. Od. 3, 25, 20: "cingentem viridi tempora pampino", which has two words virtually the same as in our passage, a colour adjective in the ablative, a similar word-order and the same metre. The Horace passage comes from a hymn to Bacchus and Kapnukajas (p. 97) sees this context of the Horatian line as the reason for the introduction of the idea of drunkenness in v. 69. Cf. echo of "roseo ... vinculo" in vv. 771-2.
71-74. Hesperus is invoked, also without being named. In a symmetrical arrangement, four lines are devoted to Hymentaeus and four to Hesperus and each invocation begins with "et tu" and a relative clause. Hesperus is invoked in most marriage songs but Kapnukajas (p. 97) goes too far in calling it a "locus communis fur alle Hochzeitslieder"; there is no mention of Hesperus in Catullus 61.
72: praevia gemini temporis: "herald of night and day". As Fordyce points out, "That the evening star and the morning star are the same, i.e. that the planet Venus is visible sometimes in the morning and sometimes in the
evening, was already known in the fifth century B.C., and the fancy of
later poets played on the notion of their identity with varied ingenuity.\footnote{Cf. Call. frg. 291 (Pfeiffer); M. Aēf. 7, 6, 70; Mel. Aēf. 12, 114;
Cat. 62, 35; Cir. vv. 35-2; Hor. Od. 2, 9, 10; Sen. Epist. v. 749.}
Note that praevius is used in a similar context in Ov. Her. 18, 112.

73. *te...te*; such anaphora is common in invocations and hymns.

74. praevius: another Ovidian touch (cf. Am. 2, 11, 55).

75-92: an encomium of the bridal pair in which first Creusa, then Jason
are praised for surpassing others in beauty. An encomium of this type
regularly occurred in wedding songs (e.g. Cat. 61, 82-6).

75-81. The beauty of the bride is favourably compared with that of the
women of the most famous cities in Greece. Here Seneca's allusive style,
with its skilful use of periphrasis and the romantic use of proper names,
achieves a delicate formality.

76. Georupias muros: women of Athens, after Georups their first king.


78. juvenum nodo: probably here and in vv. 80-1, Seneca had in mind
Theoc. 18, 22-3, where in the source of a wedding-hymn for Helen and Menelaus
the Spartan maidens declare "\textit{αἵς βρέχος} \textit{μύτος} \textit{Χρισσαχωώς} \textit{καθροτε} \textit{παρ' Εὐρύτου}
\textit{δοκρῶν}. Seneca has separated the idea of bathing and applied it to
the women of Thebes and Olympia. He has perhaps used v. 25 of Theoc. 18
in v. 94.\footnote{Cf. Call. frg. 291 (Pfeiffer); M. Aēf. 7, 6, 70; Mel. Aēf. 12, 114;
Cat. 62, 35; Cir. vv. 35-2; Hor. Od. 2, 9, 10; Sen. Epist. v. 749.}

79. nulis ... carst: cf. the command ascribed to Lycurgus in Plut. Lyg.

19, 52.
80. *et quae:* as in v. 77. Probably the women of Thebes are meant, rather than Boeotia as a whole, for Seneca seems in this stanza to be referring to famous Greek cities. *Aonius:* a learned equivalent for Boeotian. The Aones were a pre-Greek tribe in that area (according to Str. 9, 401). *Iatros:* there were several famous Boeotian springs (e.g. Dirce, Aganippe, Hippocrene) and perhaps Seneca did not intend to be specific.


82-90. Jason's handsomeness is praised.

82. *si ... velit:* a hero might prefer to be judged by qualities other than beauty.

84-90. Seneca seems to have borrowed his list of gods from Hor. *Od.* 1, 12, 21 ff., where they are listed in the same order except that Seneca omits Horace's reference to Hercules, perhaps because he was not regarded as an example of manly beauty.

84. *proles fulminis:* Bacchus, torn from the womb of his mother Semele by Jupiter's thunderbolt (cf. *Ov.* *Met.* 3, 253-315; *HP* v. 457).

85. Bacchus' team of tigers first appears in the Augustan poets (e.g. Hor. *Od.* 3, 3, 13; *Ov.* *A.A.* 1, 549; Verg. *Aen.* (6, 804), and is also mentioned in *Phaed.* v. 753. In *Oed.* v. 425, he is given a team of lions.

86. *qui tripodae motet:* Apollo, whose priestess at Delphi uttered her oracles from a three-legged stool. Cf. the echo in vv. 785-6.

87. *virginias asperae:* Diana, goddess of the hunt and wild countryside;

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1 Seneca's description is closest to that of Horace "hoc te merentem, Bacche pater tuae/ vexere tigres indocili iugum/ collo trahentes".
perhaps introduced here because she is mentioned in similar terms in Od. 1, 22, 22-3 (see note on vv. 84-90). frater virginis asperas: might suggest Medea's murder of Absyrtus (see on vv. 130-2).

88. sedet: cf. "sedent" (v. 83).

89. Pollux was traditionally a boxer; cf. e.g. A. II. 3, 237; Theoc. 22, 2; Hor. Od. 1, 12, 26.

90. sic sic caelicolae: echoed by Sil. 16, 125.

93-101: the appearance of the bride is described in four similes.

94: perhaps an echo of Theoc. 18, 25.

95. In spite of the chorus' confidence that Creusa's beauty is to be linked with the sun, the similarity with "virginus decor" (v. 75) would make the audience associate Creusa with "sidereus decor" and sense a foreshadowing of her fate: "Creusa's beauty perishes at sundown". sum: in view of the above double entendre, probably a preposition.

96-8: the idea seems to stem ultimately from Sapph. frg. 4 (Diehl), but Seneca has used Ovid in his description of the moon.

96. Pleiadum: cf. v. 865 for another colourful use of the particular for the general. greges: also of stars in HF v. 10; N.Q. 7, 27, 5; Ov. Fast. 5, 164; Manil. 5, 313.

97-8: modelled on Ov. Met. 7, 179:

tres aberant noctes, ut cornua tota coarent efficerentque orbem, postquam plenissima fulsit et solida terras spectavit imagine luna.

Seneca has however attempt to concentrate Ovid's more diffuse picture. Seneca has also used the Ovid passage in Phaed. 743 ff.

97. Phoebe: according to Hes. Th. vv. 136, 404 ff. a Titan, the grandmother
of Artemis, but later she is regularly identified with the moon, (cf. v. 770).

Lucine non su: a frequently mentioned detail; e.g. Luocr. 5, 575; Cat. 34, 15.

98. cornibus: frequently used of the moon's horn (e.g. Phaed. v. 745; Ov. Met. 7, 179). alligat: cf. Mart. 8, 51, 7 for another example of alligare referring to the moon's horns. This is the first example of this usage, analogous to that of rivers surrounding lands (first in Luc. 2, 50).

98-9. There is no need to assume a lacuna between these lines, as Leo did. The train of thought is clear enough. Last minute shyness was expected in a bride (cf. Cat. 61, 79) and this would naturally find expression in a blush (cf. Tib. 3, 4, 30 ff.). Contrast between white and red, especially in describing a complexion, had become something of a cliché in Latin poetry. Perhaps Seneca had in mind Tib. 3, 4, 30, "color in niveo corpore purpureus". See J. André, Étude sur les termes de couleur dans la langue latine (Paris, 1949), pp. 346-7 for further examples.

100. nitidum iuber: also of the dawn's rosy light in Ov. Met. 15, 186 ff.

101. roscidus pastor: moist with dew. The shepherd represents Jason gazing in awe at Creusa's beauty. The way is thus prepared for the address to Jason in the following lines.

102-6. The chorus' hostility to Medea is made clear, but the picture given of Jason is scarcely heroic (vv. 102-4).

104. trepidus: Jason's fear is a recurring motif in the play; cf. vv. 414-9; 439; 529.

105. Aeoliam: Creusa was the greatgranddaughter of Aeolus. corripie: perhaps a suggestion of the marriage by violence which was supposed to have left traces in Roman marriage practices; cf. Cat. 61, 3; 62, 21.
106. *soceris ... volentibus*: unlike his marriage to Medea. *soceris*: used for the couple as in *Tro.* v. 1002; *Ov. Met.* 3, 132; *Verg. Aen.* 2, 457. See also on "regum" (v. 56).

108. *hinc illic*: in alternate verses.


113-4: an echo of Cat. 61, 119-20: "ne diu taceat procax Fessennina iocatio".

Fessenninus: these ribald verses were a regular feature of Roman weddings. Festus (p. 76 L.) gives two derivations; one suggested the word came from the town of Fessennium, the other and more probable explanation connected it with *fascinum* and saw the verses as an attempt to overt the evil eye at a moment of happiness. See Fordyce (p. 248) for a good discussion. Other Romanisms occur in the tragedies at *HF* vv. 48; 164; 172-4; 839; *Phoen.* vv. 103; 390, *Thy.* vv. 396-400. *fumtat*: often used of speech. Note especially "convicia funders" (Ov. *Met.* 13, 306). Note the alliteration of *f* in this line, perhaps an attempt to capture the spirit of the Fessennines. Note too the spondaic hexameter.

114. *illa*: Medea, once again associated with darkness ("tenebris").

115: a hint at Medea's past conduct in following *Phaed.* and perhaps a suggestion that she is accustomed to act thus (cf. the use of *solere* in v. 541). If so, there may be a hint of Euripides' *Augeus* scene.
Act Two (vv. 116-300)

Scene One (vv. 116-78)

The domina-nutrix scene found in several of the plays is perhaps seen at its simplest here. First, there is a speech by the impassioned woman, then a speech in which the Nurse attempts to calm her. An exchange of views follows, part of which is expressed in stichomythia, but the scene ends with the woman confirmed in her passion.

116-49. Medea hearing the hymenaeus wildly threatens revenge. As she recalls her past crimes, the love for Jason that inspired them returns, and she absolves him from blame, concentrating her wrath on Creon. Medea's reaction to the hymenaeus is also depicted in Ov. Her. 12, 137-42; 153 ff.) and there too Medea lists the crimes she has committed for Jason.

116-24. Anliker (p. 38) sees in these lines an excellent illustration of Seneca's theory of the origin and nature of anger as outlined in de Ira 2, 1-2. There Seneca distinguishes true anger which arises only with the mind's approval from the first instinctive reaction to injury which not even the wise man can escape. The hymenaeus provides "species oblata iniuriae" (ibid. 2, 1, 3). Medea's first stunned reaction ("ille ictus animi", ibid. 2, 2, 2) is conveyed by "pepulit" and in v. 117. In the three angry questions that follow she makes herself fully aware of the enormity of Jason's behaviour and in vv. 123-4, her anger is unleashed and then her lust for revenge ("intellexit aliquid, indignatus est, damnavit, ulciscitur").

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117. The repetition of "vix" is effective: not even that veteran in crime, Medea ("vix ipsa"), is so steeped in evil as yet ("vix tantum" foreshadows her later crimes) that she can understand Jason’s perfidy. This line too echoes Ov. Her. 12: "nec adhuc tantum scelus esse putabam" (v. 141).

118-9. Note word-play "erepto patre/ patria" and the successive alliteration of r, s, d, m and v.

120-1. merita ... scelere: Medea's favours to Jason were crimes against others; see on vv. 50 and 136.

121. flammas: the fiery breath of the bulls whom Medea enabled Jason to subdue; cf. vv. 241; 466. mare: a reference to the murder of Absyrtus (see on vv. 131-2).

123. This line is reminiscent of the fragment of Ov. Med., quoted by Seneca the Elder (Surg. 3, 5), "feror hoc illuc ut plena deo". To judge from this fragment, Ovid's Medea was more like Seneca's frenzied character than that of Euripides, vaecors, mente vaesana: Seneca viewed anger as a form of temporary insanity (de Ira 1, 1, 1). ²

125. utinam esset illi frater: to be murdered like Absyrtus. Cf. vv. 954-6 for a similar though even more extravagant wish.

127-8. Note the personification of "urbes" and "manus" and the paronomasia ("novere ... ignorant").

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¹ Cf. also vv. 382-3; 851-2; 862.
² Cf. vv. 174; 382-3; 406-7; 851-2.
³ Thomann's "urbis" is a misprint.
130-2. Note again Seneca's love of periphrasis. inclitus regni degus: the golden fleece. parvus comes: Medea's brother, generally called Abysytus though he is not named in the play. There are various accounts of his death. In A.R. 4, 213-502, Abysytus is the leader of those who pursued Argo from Colchis and is lured by Medea into an ambush where Jason killed and dismembered him. Senecce however follows a commoner version according to which Abysytus was Medea's young brother who accompanied her on the Argo; when their father Aesetes was in hot pursuit, she cut the boy to pieces and scattered his limbs to delay her father while he paused to gather them. Some authors\(^1\) place this murder on land, others at sea.\(^2\) Seneca here ("ponto" v. 133) follows the latter version, but in v. 452 ("arva") seems to have the land story in mind. Medea seems obsessed with her brother's murder; she refers to it in vv. 47; 173; 452-3; 473-4; 487-9; 911-2; 935-6; 957 and seems to see his ghost in vv. 963-71.

132. Arva: "murder" as in v. 48. Kingery's version (p. 275), "his burial imposed upon my father" is unlikely. Inmurator is used here in the sense of obitutudem. For a different metaphorical use, cf. vv. 236; 461.

132-3. Note the chiasmus. spaurum: Leo (1, 155) sees here an echo of Triarius the rhetor's\(^3\) reference to Medea (Sen. Contr. 9, 6, 9): "quid illa quae fratrem in mora sequentis patris sparuit?"; and quotes several other

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1 E.g. A.R. 4, 213-502; Enn. (?) quoted by Cic. Nat. 3, 26, 67; Ov. Trist. 3, 9, 27.

2 Apollod. 1, 9, 24; Pherecyd. (according to schol. on A.R. 4, 223; 226).

3 See R. Dormeque, Les Declamations et les Declarateurs d'après Seneca le Père (Lille, 1902), p. 196 for information on Triarius.
alleged examples\(^1\) of imitations of Triarius' use of "sparsit". However *sparso* is not an unnatural word to use in this context and in fact occurs in some lines on Absyrtus' murder, quoted by Cicero (*N.D.* 3, 27, 67). See v. 173 for another possible use of Triarius' comment.

133-4. *et Pelias ... membra*: by pretending that she would thus restore Pelias to youth (as she had Aeson, Jason's father), Medea persuaded his daughters to cut him up and boil him in a cauldron (cf. vv. 201; 258-61; 276; 475-6; 664-7). It was Pelias, Jason's uncle who had sent him in search of the fleece (cf. v. 664). After his death, his son Acastus drove Jason and Medea from Ioleos to Corinth and was still seeking to punish them (cf. vv. 256-7; 415; 526). *funestum*: echoes the sound of "funus ingestum" (v. 132). For similar tricks, see on vv. 486; 548.

135-6. These lines again show Seneca's skill in hinting at a character's train of thought (cf. note on v. 26 ff.) and at the reasons for a sudden change of mood. *et nullum scelus irata faci*: Medea begins with the implied threat that if she has committed so many crimes when not angry, her present anger will cause even more dreadful crimes. *saevit infelix amor*: she feels moved to provide an explanation of the past with overtones of self-defence.

The asyndeton and the positions of "irata" and "amor" emphasize the opposition between wrath and love and the irony of the fact that love caused so much bloodshed. For the Stoic, of course, love, like the other emotions, is viewed as wrong and potentially destructive because of the distorted sense of values it imparts.

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\(^1\) E.g. *Phaed.* v. 1208; *H.O* v. 1394; *Ov. Har.* 6, 129; *Met.* 7, 442; *Luc.* 8, 98.
137-42. After the skilfully-placed "amor", the speaker would doubtless pause to allow Medea to succumb once more to her old love. Euripides' Medea has no such lingering affection for Jason. In v. 138, anger blazes forth again, but then is overcome by love. These sudden transitions, the use of apostrophe and exclamation would allow full rein to the declaimer's talents. A similar technique is employed on a larger scale in the conflict between anger and mother-love (vv. 910-71; 987-92).

137. guid ... Jason potuit: echoes v. 118.

139. Cf. v. 930, "melius a demens furor". dolor: for such apostrophes, see p. 31 above; for dolor as a motif in Med. see p. 16. In the other tragedies, characters appeal to their dolor at Thy. vv. 107; 595; Ag. v. 649; IIo vv. 295; 308; 1446.

140-1. Note the parallelism of clauses - another favourite device of the declaimer; Bonner (pp. 67-9) lists many examples from the elder Seneca. It is of course also common in the younger Seneca's prose works, and also in the tragedies (see vv. 194; 434 ff.; IIIF vv. 433-4; Thy. vv. 510-2; Thy. v. 613 ff).

140-1. vivat: despite Medea's change of feeling, the audience would no doubt recall the very different "vivat" of v. 20.

142. memorque nostrì: cf. v. 556. muneri: Jason's life (cf. the use of munus in vv. 228; 230). nostrì ..., nec: such variations are not uncommon.

144-5. The present phrase has been adduced to show that Medea has already

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1 See Summer (Select Letters, p. Lucid) for some examples.
been parted from her children. However the children are with Medea in the
final act, and here Medea probably only means that the banishment order
has been made (cf. v. 179 ff.) and the separation imminent. In any case
her purpose is not to give information but to paint a picture of a cruel,
tyrannical Creon.

146. *poenas iuvat:* also at line-end in Oed. v. 222.

147-9: foreshadow Creon's punishments (cf. E. Med. v. 378). The present
lines contain a reworking of certain phrases in the prologue: cf. "crenata
flammae" (v. 36); "opponens moras" (v. 35); "videbit Isthmus" (v. 45).

149. *Macles:* at the southern tip of the Peloponnesse, a hundred miles from
Corinth. *flectens moras:* a bold variation on the technical term,
*promontorium flectens* (cf. Cic. Div 2, 45, 94; Att. 5, 9, 1).

150-78. The Nurse vainly tries to calm Medea. These lines in no way
advance the plot, though the Nurse does serve as a norm against which we
can more clearly judge the extent of Medea's wrath. A nurse or some other
confidant occurs in most of the plays; generally these characters confront a
major character, who is contemplating some wrong action; with the moral issues,
especially as seen from the Stoic viewpoint. However Medea's Nurse is more
practical, less philosophical in approach than, for example the Nurse in the

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1 Cf. W. Schulze, *Untersuchungen zur Eigenart der Tragedien Senecas* (Diss.

2 B. Marti (*A New Interpretation*, p. 232, suggests that the confidantes are
direct symbols of the rational part of the soul as it clashes with the
irrational.
Phaedra.

150-4. Brady (p. 83) feels that the Nurse is here pretending to side with Medea's aims in order to calm her and compares de Ira 3, 39, 3. However that may be, Medea (v. 155 ff.) firmly rejects the Nurse's advice to rely on deceit - she is thus very different from Euripides' Medea (cf. E. Med. vv. 260-3).

150. Note the emphatic juxtaposition of "secreto", "abditos".

151-4. Note the repetition of the same idea in different words - a characteristic of Seneca's prose style also.

153. This line recalls Pub. Syr. frg. 510 (R): "qui bene dissimulat, citius inimico nocet."

153-4. Note the effective use of antithesis - a frequent feature of sententiae (cf. vv. 155-6; 159; etc.).

154. perdunt oda: such personifications of abstracts are common in semi-proverbial expressions (cf. vv. 155; 159 etc.).

156. clepere: an archaic verb, usually meaning "to steal" but used reflexively in the sense of "conceal oneself" here and in HF v. 799.

157. libet ire contra: again reminiscent of Ov. Her. 12, 155. Cf. vv. 27;

593. impetus: refers not to the first instinctive impulse but to the considered emotion (see on vv. 116-29) and note de Ira 2, 1, 5: "Ille simplex est, hic compositus et plura continens". Cf. v. 381; HF v. 975; Phaed. vv. 255; 263; Ag. v. 205 for other cases where a nurse or confidant urges her charge to check his or her impetus.

158. tacita ... quies: Seneca is fond of the common Latin idiom" whereby

1 See Fordyce, p. 209 (on Cat. 56, 1) for examples.
an adjective reinforces a noun of similar meaning; cf. in Med., "furoris lymphati" (v. 386); "gelida glacies" (v. 736). See p. 26 above for other tautological epithets.

159-73: stichomythia, reduced by Seneca to a contest in cleverness. Note how Medea picks up the Nurse's words and in rebuttal incorporates them in a sententia of her own: "Locum virtus" (v. 160) is echoed by "virtuti locus" (v. 161); "espes nulla" (v. 162) by "nil ... sperare, desperat nihil" (v. 163); "superest" (v. 165) by "superest" (v. 166) in same line-position; "rex" by "rex" (v. 168); "profuge" by "fugae" (v. 170); "profugere" by "fugiae" (v. 172); "animos" (v. 175) by "animum" (v. 176).

159. fortuna fortas metuit: common proverbial expression. Note the play on words in "fortuna fortas" (cf. "ventis ..., venturis", Ag. v. 469). The proverb is quoted with minor variations by many Latin writers, from Ter. Phorm. 1, 4, 26 on. 1 Vergil's version (Ag. 10, 284) is incorporated by Seneca (Ep. 94, 26) into a verse of his own, "audentes fortuna iuvat, piger ipse nibi obstat", in a passage where he is stressing the value of such maxims. Medea exhibits a similarly defiant attitude to fortune in vv. 176; 520. 2 It must have been piquant for the audience to hear Medea of all people taking so Stoic a viewpoint. As Medea's reply in v. 161 suggests ill-fortune offers a shining opportunity to display one's goodness. Cf. Prov. 4, 21: "magnus vir es; sed unde scio, si tibi fortuna non dat facultatem exhibendas

1 Cf. Is. a. fortis, IIIA for further examples.

2 Cf. Cassandra's words (Ag. v. 698) and Jocasta's advice (Oed. v. 816).
162. *monstrat viam*: also occurs in metaphorical sense in some lines of Ennius (*Tel. II*, 274; *R.*, 1, 55).

163. For a similar sentiment, cf. *Ag.* v. 146. Note also *Ep.* 5, 7, "desinete ... timere, si sperare desieris". To the Stoics, despair was moral weakness (*SVF* 3, 415).

166. *Medea superest*: an admirable reply and one of true Stoic self-sufficiency! Cf. v. 540 where Medea again gives expression to the Stoic attitude to externals. Note also "Medea fiam" (v. 171) and "Medea nunc sum" (v. 910) and see Summers (*Select Letters*, p. 300; on *Ep.* 87, 10) for other examples of this type of emphasis.

166-7. Note the vivacity lent these lines by polysyndeton.

168 ff. The Nurse's attempt to stress the dangers inherent in Medea's attitude is fully consonant with the advice given by Seneca in *de Ira* 3, 1, 2. Cf. also *Ag.* v. 220 ff. and *Phaed.* vv. 145-7.

168. *rex meus fuerat pater*: a point Medea effectively repeats in her plea to Creon (v. 203 ff.).

169. *arma*: for *armatos*. Cf. "remos" (v. 360); "sceptrum" (v. 526). *terra edita*: a reference to the warriors who sprang from the dragon's teeth planted by Jason and whom he defeated with Medea's aid. Cf. vv. 469-70.

171. *Medea ... Fiam*: Medea herself means that she will fulfill her potentiality for destruction, for as yet "levia memoravi nimirum", v. 48. The audience will see here a promise to become the Medea of tradition. See further on v. 910.

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Cf. *Prov.* 4, 12; 3, 3; *Tr. An.* 16, 3, 4.
qui num vidis: Miller's interpretation "by whom, thou seest" (1, 24) accords with the point made in vv. 920-2, and is more plausible than Kingery's "you see whose mother I am" meaning no-one's (p. 276).

173. *vindex sequatur, Forsan inventam nomen*: Leo (1, 155) may be right in seeing here an echo of Triarius' comment on Medea (see on v. 133). Certainly the reference is to the way Medea delayed her father.

176. See on v. 159. The present line makes clear the Stoic view that fortune operates in the sphere of the exterior not the interior life (cf. *Ep. 66, 23*). Seneca may have had in mind here *Sec. Telephus VI, 619-20* (R); "nec si a me regnum Fortuna atque opem/ eripere quivit, at virtutem nec quivit". *opas*: Medea seems to be harking back to the Nurse's comments (vv. 164-5).

177. *sed*: corresponds to the *καὶ μην, ἀλλὰ* etc., with which the Greek tragedians especially Euripides (e.g. *Ion* v. 392) so often break off conversations or monologues when a new character enters. *cardo strepit*: as Kingery (p. 276) points out, the breaking door-pivot is often employed by Plautus and Terence to announce the entrance of a character. The device is rare in Seneca; the only other examples are at *Oed. v. 911, 995; HO v. 254.*

178. *Preta*: this adjective often has a tinge of contempt (cf. *Tro. v. 753; Ag. v. 633; Verg. *Aen.* 2, 106; 152. *tumidus*: tumor and its derivatives occur frequently in the tragedians, as in other authors, to depict pride and passionate anger. This usage has a philosophical base in the Stoic belief that the soul expands when controlled by desire or passion (cf. *SVF* 1, 209; 206; 209).
Scene Two (vv. 179-200)

Creon enters and angrily asks why Medea has not left Corinth as he had ordered. Medea defends herself and eventually Creon grants her a respite of one day.

The corresponding scene in E. Med. vv. 271-356 has influenced Seneca to a certain extent. The outcome of each scene is the same and a few phrases in Seneca, particularly at the beginning and end of the scene, seem influenced by Euripides. But there are several differences of circumstance and the arguments used by Seneca’s characters differ from those in Euripides, both in content and in the rhetorical expression given them by Seneca. Ovid’s influence is apparent in places.

At the end of this scene, Medea is granted a day’s delay but this concession is not wrung from Creon in a dramatic duel, but “as a result of a verbal game of draughts.” Creon is too peremptory (note especially v. 252 ff.) and unsure of himself (e.g. “infimus timor”, v. 294) to be an effective opponent for Medea. The stichomythia and other brief statements are for the most part wooden verbalizing. Yet the scene is not devoid of interest. Medea’s longer speeches (vv. 203-52; 272-80) are an effective blend of eloquence with reasoned arguments and appeals to pathos. Again, her demand for justice, though lacking “bite” in vv. 192-202, raises the interesting question of responsibility (see vv. 275 ff.).

1 See on vv. 179-80; 255-6; 263.

179-80. Note that in E. Med. vv. 271-6, Creon issues the banishment order at the beginning of the scene.


183. Jason repeats this point (vv. 490-1). Euripides mentions it only in his Jason scene (Med. vv. 453-4).

185. Heretf lines note: for similar phrases, see vv. 270; 872; Tro. v. 551.

186 ff. With "fort gradi: contra", Creon sees Medea approaching. Friedrich points out that Seneca's technique in the following lines conforms to a regular pattern; a newly-arrived character enters, comments on the appearance of one already present, then addresses him and conversation follows. Cf. Ag. v. 922 ff.; Thy. v. 505 ff.; HP v. 354 ff. Med. v. 44 ff. differs in that Medea addresses Jason first.

186-7. Classky (p. 49) sees E. Med. v. 271 as the source of these lines, but E.C. Evans shows that here and throughout the play, Seneca lays much greater stress on Medea's eyes and describes in much more detail her facial expression. She attributes this to "a specific Stoic interest on the part of Seneca in the ideas of the physiognomists" (p. 175) and cites many passages from Seneca's prose works to support this. Other striking pictures of the facial manifestations of Medea's anger occur at vv. 380-96; 445-6; 849-61. Note

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1 Untersuchungen zu Senecas dramatischer Technik (Diss. Borna-Leipsig, 1933), p. 5.

chiasmus in vv. 186-7.

188-90. These orders to the attendants are perhaps an echo of E. Med. v. 335.

190. aliqua; for she had disobeyed her father. Note alliteration of v.

192-202: Medea tries to elicit from Creon a legal reason for her exile.¹

She is aware that she has done wrong (vv. 236-7; 246), but claims that since
she has committed her crimes for Jason and the Argonauts (vv. 226-35; 236;
241), the responsibility for them is not hers alone (vv. 275-80; cf. vv. 500-1)
and besides Creon knew her past when he first granted the fugitives refuge
in Corinth (vv. 247-8).

192. crimen:  Ferronoud² argues that the word here means "charge", but the
three other passages in the tragedies where crimen and culpa are coupled
(vv. 935-6; Th. v. 321; Hf v. 1201) do not support this interpretation. There
is a similar question in E. Med. v. 281, but there Medea does not pursue the
point. fuga: picks up "fuga", v. 190.

193: heavy irony.

194. Medea continues to use legal terminology. She picks up Creon's
"cause" (v. 193) and gives it a legal connotation, for causa comporere is
a technical term meaning "institute a judicial inquiry".

195. Note the succession "regnas" (v. 194); "regis" (v. 195), "regna" (v. 196).
Creon's sentiments here accord with those of other kings in the tragedies

¹ For other passages which Seneca gives a legal flavour, see Hf vv. 172-4;
Med. v. 695; Phoen. v. 559; Ag. vv. 277-80.

² Lat. 22 (1963), 490.
(cf. HP v. 502; Th. v. 214; Phoen. v. 654 ff.).

196. Cf. Phoen. v. 660; Th. v. 258, for very similar statements. Note also Th. v. 215 ff.

197. Hecuba: cf. vv. 650; 1007, for similar expressions. See Carter (p. 148) for examples in the other tragedies. As Coffey (p. 116) observes, Kendall (p. 167) is wrong to see here the influence of Roman satire; the expression occurs not uncommonly in other authors (e.g. Ov. Ars 2, 222).

197. qui avit: Jason. Cf. vv. 246; 273-5; 489.

199-200. Hermann (p. 90) feels there may be a reference to Claudius here; cf. Appol. 14, 2, "altera tantum parte audita". The idea however is common enough; cf. A. Au. v. 428; E. Herse. v. 179.

203-20: Medea reminds Creon that she too is of royal birth.

204. concitatum: anger like love (Phaed. vv. 132-4) must be subdued in the earliest stages (de Ira 3, 10, 2).


209. Aule: as in v. 218. For a similar wistful repetition of Aule, cf. Cat. 6, 3 and 6. With "sole" (v. 210), there is a suggestion of the literal meaning of Aule.


212. Fortunae ... a tergo videt: a vivid personification (cf. "quid terga vertis, anima?" Ag. v. 228). A tergo: suggests Medea looking back at the homeland she was leaving. Cf. v. 303.

213. varia dulcissum: many rivers flow into the Black Sea, making the shores marshy ("palustribus") and carrying mud and fresh water far out to sea (cf. Plb. 4, 41-2; Str. 1, 50; Plin. H.N. 4, 12, 79). Dulcissum: only here

1Our Seneca (New Haven, 1941).
in Seneca's tragedies, but used in a similar context in Plin. H.R. 3, 18, 127.

214. armata peltis ... eohore: the Amazons. eohore: a touch of humour
in the use of this Roman military term for such exotic barbarians. peltis:
reference is frequently made to their crescent-shaped shields (cf. HF v. 545;
Phaed. v. 409; Ag. v. 216; Verg. Aen. 1, 490; 11, 663).

215. vidua: cf. HF v. 245. Thermodonties: they lived near the river
Thermodon at the southeast of the Black Sea (cf. HF v. 245; Verg. Aen. 11,
659).

216. petebant ... thalamos: bitterly echoed in v. 1007. petebant ...
petuntur: for this type of paronomasia, cf. vv. 27-8.

219-22. Medea makes it clear that her fall has implications for Creon;
fatigue can humble any king or man of wealth.1 The fickleness of fortune
(cf. vv. 286; 568-9; Phaed. v. 112-3) and the consequent impermanence of
kingship (cf. vv. 286-7; Trig. vv. 1-6; Od. v. 11; Ag. vv. 57-9) find frequent
expression in the tragedies.

222-5: Kings should show a humble and humanitarian spirit (cf. vv. 252-7;
Eum. 1, 13, 4-5; Ag. 90, 5); thus they may placate envious fortune or learn
to withstand her blows (cf. Trig. vv. 259-63; 694-7). Medea is preparing the
way for her own request (vv. 249-51).

225-35. In E. Med. vv. 476 f.; 515, Medea also points out that she saved

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1 Henry and Walker, loc. cit., take "confide regnis" at its face-value and
see an inconsistency with v. 196. Surely, in view of the stress on the
fickleness of fortune in these lines (in vv. 219-20, fortune snatched Medea
from her kingdom; in vv. 221-2, chance toys with great wealth), "confide
regnis" must be said with rueful irony.
Jason. 1. More noteworthy are two passages in Ovid where Medea declares herself also the deliverer of the Argonauts (Met. 7, 55; Her. 12, 209). However verbal similarities are slight and Seneca treats the theme at greater length. Medea uses the same argument in v. 454 ff. 2

226-9. Here we have an interesting example of "blending-technique". We have a touch of Horace, two suggestions of Catullus and a brief allusion to the Orpheus motif beloved of Roman poets and here perhaps echoing Ov. Met. 11, 1-2. 2. 2. docus ... praeclaria: cf. Hor. Od. 1, 1, 2. 2. Flores ... Achive: cf. Cat. 64, 4. provis dolum: cf. Cat. 64, 23. Flores: the metaphorical uses are common; see L.s. 1. flos II.

231. natique Borga: Zetes and Calais. Cf. v. 634.
232. Lycus: renowned for his keenness of vision.

233. ducens ... ducum: for similar examples of paronomasia, see vv. 311, 512.

234. debetur ... inspici: Coffey (p. 121) observes "Seneca's technical imagery usually has the function of illustrating some moral evaluation, state or judgement and often occurs at a rhetorical climax. Seneca's prose works also have a penchant for financial imagery for beyond what is common usage in the First Century A.D." See p. 39 above for other such metaphors in Med. For inspicius cf. Phaed. v. 144; Oct. v. 616.

235: effective use of chiasmus.

237-8. obiit crimen hoc salum potest/ Arcy reversed: for this depended on her misdeeds. obiit crimen: cf. vv. 497-8.

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1. Cf. also Ov. Her. 12, 75 ff.; 173; 197; Med. frag. 1.

2. Note how the chorus (vv. 607-69) by implication contradicts Medea.
238-9: Medea once had pudor and pater (as Creusa does now), but she gave this up for Jason; only for him to become Creon’s “genus”. Note chiasmus, anaphora and alliteration of p. placet: Medea’s problem is put in terms of a sanctora.

242-3: Medea claims to have herself followed the precepts for royalty that she outlines in vv. 222-5.

244. prennum: Jason.

246. redde orison: Jason, for whom the crimes were committed. There is no exact parallel to this bold use of metonymy, but Seneca has prepared the way by “obici ... orison .../ Argo reverse” (vv. 237-3); Jason reversus is implicit in this. Further vv. 244-5 make it clear that Medea has Jason in mind here. Pirenne (p. 496) sees a double entendre here, feeling that “redde orison” is a variant of the legal technical term judicium reddare, and translates “rende-od l’acconsazione formale centro noi”. The legal setting for this interpretation has been provided by “damna reus” (of, vv. 192-202). Further this view harmonises well with the implication of vv.

247-8: Creon condemned her past actions by his hospitality; why then is she being exiled now? *quam poenam*: cf. her explanation of this phrase in v. 230.


252-6. Note the onward propositio of these lines with their inverted word-

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1 In Od. v. 375 and Verg. Aen. 12, 200, “orison” denotes the person who committed a crime.

2 Pirenne (p. 497) feels that the audience only comes to appreciate that “orison” can refer to Jason at vv. 272-3, but surely in view of vv. 244-5, this would be immediately clear.
order, and clumsy use of the gerund and of "nunc clara parum". Green is replying to Medea's comments (vv. 203-7; 222-5). In E. Med. vv. 348-9, Green makes a similar assertion.

252-3. acceptum ... superbo ... pede: echo v. 205.

255-6. gravii terrae pavidius: cf. on v. 104. Euripides does not mention Acastus at all in his Med. and fear is not one of Jason's motives for leaving Medea.

259. assisi: Axelrod¹ points out that in Seneca's tragedies saecere is used only of animals or of men slaughtered like sacrificial animals (as here and in Thy. v. 1058).

261: an adaptation of Ov. Met. 7, 339, "his ut quaque pia est, hortatibus impia praxa est", which describes the same scene.

263-4. In Ov. Met. 7, 297-8, Jason takes no part in the murder of Pelias.

266: Medea herself dealt the death-blow (ibid. vv. 348-9).

265. vestro: Fordyce (pp. 188-9, on Cat. 39, 20) observes "vno is never equivalent to tu in classical Latin, and vestro, where it does not refer directly to a plural subject, generally has an obvious plural implication ... but there is a residue of cases in which the plural reference is far from obvious." Here, probably "vestro ... coetu" includes Medea's unwitting accomplices, the daughters of Pelias. It is likely that the difficulty of this phrase is due to the fact that Seneca has borrowed it, together with certain other phrases (see on vv. 269-71) from Oio. Cat. 1, 10, without properly integrating it into his own context.

¹ Cited by Coffey (p. 179). Axelrod thinks Cat. and HD are not by Seneca and notes that the use of saecere in these plays is quite different.
266-71: the *sorduplicatio* and *asynodoton* help convey *Oedon's* agitation.

266. *sorduplicatio*: only here in classical Latin, but cf. *Iug. v. 750,* "O sordulator fraudies et sociorum artifex." Cf. also *Cic. Cat. 3, 6.*

269-71: cf. *Cic. Cat. 1, 10: "agredere aliquando ex urbe ... educ tecum etiam omnis tuos ... purga urbebus, magno me metu liberaveris"*, and *ibid. 1, 20: "agredere ex urbe ... libera rem publicam metu*. *Letales ... hortas*; those used in her magic (cf. v. 706 ff.).

271. *gollia deos*: by her witchcraft (cf. vv. 424; 673) and by her wickedness in general (cf. v. 1027).


272-4. Note the emphasis given by the repetition of key words: "profugere ... fugienti ... fugeru"; "reddc ... redde"; "solem ... sola".

272. *reddc fugienti ratem*: cf. v. 489 for a similar phrase in the same line position.


274. *bella*: i.e. with *Asastus.*

276-9. *novas ... coniuges*: for the taunting plural, cf. 1007; *Ag. v. 194.*

276. *docet*: implies that Jason suggested the crimes as well as benefiting from them.

280. *tötens nocens sus facte*: variation on *Ov. Hap. 12, 132: "pro quo sus totiens esse consta nocens"*. See also on v. 503 below.

281. Probably "seris" is from *serare*, "to join together", rather than *serare*, "to sow". See *L.s. 2 sero II.*

282. *supplex*: a point stressed by Medea throughout the scene; cf. vv. 208; 224; 244.

283: another *double-entendre*, foreshadowing for the audience the child-murder;
the audience's hopes that somehow the catastrophe may be averted are given expression by the murderous herself. Note that the children are not included in the banishment-order (unlike E. Med. vv. 273; 353).


288-90. Cf. Tro. vv. 760-2:

braves nescum largire, dum officium parent
nato suprema redde et ampliss ultime
avidos dolores satio.


290. *fortasse moriones: the audience would appreciate the irony.

290-5: again conversation proceeds by the characters picking up one another's words. Note "fraudibus tempus" (v. 290), "fraus ... tempore" (v. 291), "tempus" (v. 292), "temporis" (v. 293).

294-5: echo E. Med. vv. 350-1. *infimus: picks up "infigo" (v. 289). Henry and Walker make the interesting point that "exilic" offers "a production opportunity for an actor's stumble to exitio", in view of "teque in exitium para" (v. 51). waev ... diei: cf. vv. 399; 421; and note on v. 1017.

296. *recidas: this metaphor from agriculture occurs elsewhere in the tragedies, only at Tro. v. 1123.


300. *vestta ... dies: cf. the grim echo in v. 985.

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Loc. cit.
CHAPTER THREE

Second Chorus (vv. 301-72)

The greater part of this chorus (vv. 301-63) criticizes the first sea-voyage made by Argo (see on v. 2), but in vv. 364-72, Seneca describes the ease of sea-travel in his own day and foresees the discovery of new lands in the future. There is a difference of tone between the two parts, yet it is not as sharp as Gattin 1 would have us believe. The extended descriptions of the stars used by later seamen (vv. 309-15) and the sailing techniques discovered by Tiphys (vv. 316-23) betray a certain admiration for these feats — an admiration that clearly emerges in the anticipation of future discoveries (vv. 374-9). Note on the other hand that vv. 371-2 do not suggest a wholly enthusiastic attitude to the mingling of peoples. The chorus's ambivalent view of seafaring accords with that in Seneca's prose works, where perhaps the clearest expression of his views is in Natur. 5, 18, 4: "quid quad omnibus inter se populis commercium dedit et gentes dissipatibus locis dissiciat? ingens naturae beneficium, si illud in inimicam suas non vertat maximus furor", and ibid. 11: "magna pare arat pacis humanae maria praecedunt non tamen ... quari possessas de nostro nostro deo, si beneficia sias corruptas." The meter is the anapaestic dactyl.

301-63. The theme of these lines, the evil of seafaring, though appropriate enough in this context, had become by Seneca's day, a trite commonplace.

Distaste for navigation is expressed throughout ancient literature from
Hesiod on (Op. vv. 236-7), and under the Roman Empire was a cliché of the
rhetorical schools (cf. Sen. Navis. 1). Man's natural distrust of the
treacherous sea was given a moralistic basis by the view of the Cynics and
certain of the Stoics that man's downfall has been brought about mainly by
his own inventions, and in particular that by venturing on the sea, he has
departed from his rightful place in the divine order of things (cf. "terrestre
animal homo", Colus. 1. Pseudo. 8). In the Golden Age there were no ships
(cf. Arat. vv. 110-1; Verg. Ecl. 4, 32; Geor. 1, 130; Ov. Nat. 1, 94; Hor.
Od. 1, 3, 21; Tib. 1, 3, 38 ff.; Med. v. 329 ff.; Phaed. v. 530). Hence
strong disapproval is frequently expressed for the first sea voyage (cf. Hor.

This first part of the chorus is greatly influenced by Hor. Od. 1,
3, 9-24. There are some clear verbal imitations of this ode and its in-
fluence can be traced throughout. Seneca's treatment of Horace in this
chorus accords well with the views on imitation that he expresses in his
prose works (see pp. 33-4 above). He has altered his model, by expanding
ideas (e.g. in vv. 350-60), by changing the order of words (see on vv. 301-2),
and has borrowed details from other passages (especially from Ovid) and from

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1 See K.F. Smith, The Elegies of Albius Tibullus, (1st ed., 1913; reprinted,
Darmstadt, 1964), pp. 246-7 for many examples.

2 This point was particularly appealing to the Romans, who had remained for
so long a people of farmers (cf. Flor. 1, 18, 4: "ille rudis, ille
pastoricius populus, versusque terrestres").
his own experience (vv. 313-20) to give his lines a different flavour.

302-6. The first sailor was too bold; his boat was frail and the elements treacherous. The model is clearly Hor. 22. 1, 3, 9-12:

\[ \text{rili robur et sua triplex,} \]

\[ \text{circa pestus orat, illa fragilis trust} \]

\[ \text{exuest palaeo maris nubibus.} \]

in which the words underlined occur in Hor. v. 312-3. Note how Seneca has replaced the picture in v. 9 of the ode with "audax" culled from the beginning of vv. 25, 27 in the same poem. He has then elaborated with the aid of Ovid.

302. This line is quoted as Seneca's by the late fourth-century grammarian, Dionysius (Epist. 1, p. 311). *audax*: *cf.* also *Hor. 22. 1*, *gr. *quidem*.

Seneca keeps his picture as general as Horace's until v. 314.

302. *Fragili pertida*: an effective juxtaposition; cf. "Fragilis trust" (Hor. 22. 1, 3, 10).

303. Influenced by *Ov. Trick. 3, 10, 61-2*, "pars agitatur vinctis post tangus capta lacertiae* nesciencia frutrum varum laceraque acerbo", which also describes the pain of leaving home. Note that Seneca has used Ovid's "post tangas", but in quite a different way. It is a favourite trick of Seneca to incorporate into his own setting a seemingly irrelevant point from his model; cf. *p. 36* above. *post tangas videmus*: *cf.* also *v. 212* above, where Medea seems to be recalling her last glimpse of her native land.

304-6. Perhaps Seneca here has in mind the ship which Ovid compares unfavourably to the "vasta carina" of Jason: "hoc fragilis ligne vastum subnavium sequens" (*Epist. 1, 4, 35*).
305. *secania*; frequently used of travel through water (cf. L.S. *secan*
Ic.26 and *Phaed.* v. 530).
306-8: reminiscent of Sen. *Contx.* 7, 1, 10: "parva materia sedungi it fata".
Cf. also Anacharsis' comment on the nearness to death of sailors (D.I. 1,
103), and Juv. 12, 57 ff.; 14, 289.
309-17. The stars and winds were not yet known. This theme also is found
in Hor. *Od.* 1, 3, 12-6, but Seneca has avoided verbal imitation except for
mention of the Hyades. Note the anaphora "nondum ... non ... nondum ... 
nondum".
310. *stellisque culibus pingitur aether*: this metaphor is apparently first
used in Latin of the stars in Manil. 1, 445, "caelum depingitur astra".1
There is a similar example in *Tay.* v. 834, "et vagis picti sidera mundi".
*Pinge* is also used metaphorically in *Od.* v. 317 and less strikingly in *Hf*
v. 467; *Phaed.* v. 46. For another likely metaphor from art, cf. *v.* 181
above. Metaphors from painting and sculpture are not common in the tragedies
or the prose works.2 Contempt for art and aesthetic pleasure is of course a
recurring theme in Stoic and Cynic thought; cf. *Ep.* 68, 18, "non anima adducor

1. Perhaps Seneca was also influenced by contemporary representations of the
heavens, such as the revolving roof of the dining-room in Nero's Golden
House (*Suet. N.).* Note too that on one occasion the *velarium* (awning)
in a theatre had painted on it Nero as the sungod in a chariot among stars
(*D.C.* 63, 6, 2).

2. For examples in the tragedies, see *Cantor* (p. 113); for those in the
prose works, see *Steyns* (p. 116).
ut in numerum liberalium artium pictores recipiam, non magis quam statuariorum aut marmariorum aut ceteros luxuriae ministros.\(^1\) However it is likely that in this matter as in others,\(^2\) Seneca's philosophical theories are in conflict with his real emotions. His tragedies and prose-works reveal a powerful pictorial imagination\(^3\) that may have been fostered by the fine paintings of the period (cf. his revealing use of "tamquam pictor" in Ep. 113, 26). 311-5. As befits the author of the N.C.,\(^4\) Seneca has inserted many astronomical descriptions in the tragedies. Since however he repeats so many traditional features in his descriptions of the various heavenly bodies, it is often difficult to decide whether he is following a definite model or not. Here however Ovid's influence may be detected; there is a first study of the stars and winds for navigational passages in Met. 3, 593-5, a passage in which three of the constellations here named are mentioned. Two other passages from Ovid seem to be behind vv. 314-5.

311-2. *pluvias Hyades*: cf. Verg. Aen. 1, 744; 3, 516. "Fluvias" here represents Horace's "tristes" (Od. 1, 3, 14). The morning rising of the Hyades in May and the morning setting in November occurred at the time of the spring and autumn rains.

\(^{1}\) For a mocking picture of the strict Stoic anti-aesthete, cf. Cic. Cael. 42.

\(^{2}\) See on v. 694.


\(^{4}\) But as Hermann (p. 513) observes, in the tragedies, Seneca repeats traditional astronomical errors that he refutes in N.C.
313. *Oleniae lumina caprae*: Amalthea, the goat that suckled Zeus near Olenus in Arcadia and was set in the sky. This is another herald of rain; cf. *"Oleniae sidus pluviale Capallae"* (Ov. *Nat.* 3, 594).

314-5. These lines seem influenced by Ov. *Nat.* 2, 176-7, "Bootes/ quamvis tardus erat et to tua planastra tenebant", and "flexerat oblique temone planastra Bootes", (Not. 10, 447). *planastra*: identical with Arctos, the Great Bear (cf. H. 11, 16, 467). It appears under this latter name (together with the Lesser Bear) in v. 405, while in v. 759 the Latin term "Uranus" is used. This constellation was of great assistance in navigating; cf. Arat. 37-3; Manil. 1, 292-300; NF vv. 6-7. *Arctos*: this, the reading of A, is surely preferable to "Attica" of E. With this adjective Seneca is deliberately mixing the two conceptions of bear and wagon; cf. Thuc. v. 874; *K* v. 1523. *Bootes*: the Wagon driver. Also called *Arctophylax* (Thuc. v. 874). *tardus*: since the constellation is so near the North Pole, its revolution is very slow and *tardus* is its stock-epithet (cf. Cat. 66, 67; Ov. *Nat.* 2, 177; Thuc. v. 873).

316. Seneca devotes the fifth book of *N.R.* to the winds (see especially, 5, 16). For a discussion of Seneca's use of the winds in the lyrical passages of the tragedies, see Cattin (pp. 84-8).

318-26. Tiphys' discovery of the techniques of sailing are described (for

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1 Cattin (p. 76) thinks that this phrase refers to the Nandi, who were Amalthea's children. This strained interpretation ignores the relevance of Ov. *Nat.* 3, 594. Further, "lumina" suggests the brightness of Amalthea, rather than the feeble light of the Kids (cf. Cic. *Nat.* 2, 42, 110).
Argo as the first ship, see v. 3). Seneca clearly thinks of Argo in terms of the vessels of his own day. These lines suggest a certain admiration for and a good knowledge of the skills involved. Seneca himself had no great cause to love sailing. He had experienced a severe storm on his return from Egypt in 31 A.D. (Helv. 19, 4-5) and on another occasion suffered so terribly from seasickness on a trip from Naples to Puteoli that he soon ashore rather than continue the voyage, and ruefully comments, "quid non potest nili persuasendi ac persuasum sit ut navigare?" (Ep. 53, 1). Yet he was clearly interested in sailing (cf. his description of the Alexandrian grain-ships in Ep. 77, 1-2), and his prose works abound in metaphor from navigation and the sea (cf. Steyns, pp. 71-83).

318. exsum: cf. "audax" vv. 301, 316. Cf. also vv. 599, 607. Tintma: see on v. 9. pandera: the technical word for spreading sail: cf. Plant. Stich. 2, 2, 45; Cic. Tusq. 1, 49, 119; Plin. N.H. 19, 9; Quint. 6, 1, 52. vasta: frequently used of the sea by Vergil (e.g. Aen. 1, 118; 3, 151; 4.21). and by Seneca (Ero. vv. 650; 689; 930; Eucle. vv. 63, 1007; 1204; Oed. vv. 9, 1015). It is an apt word here with its connotations of awesome desolation.

319. garum: a type of fine flax, originally grown near Tarragona in Spain (Plin. N.H. 19, 10), but frequently used for "sail", without special reference to material from this plant; cf. IF v. 152 and IS.s. garum: III. 319-20. legesque ... scribere: there is no precise parallel for the metaphorical use of this technical term from law making. Lex itself is of course commonly used in a metaphorical sense; cf. v. 365. For other legal

metaphors in Med. see p. 37 above; in the other tragedies, see Cantor, p. 117; in the prose works, see Stenus, pp. 88-99. In spite of Seneca's taste for giving various situations a legal flavour (e.g. vv. 192-202), legal metaphors are not nearly as frequent in the tragedies as in the prose works. novas: with suggestions of "unnatural".

320-8. Four types of sailing conditions are described, the first two (vv. 320-2) concerned with wind direction, the second pair with wind strength. 320-1. *line... tendere:* when there was a following wind, the sail was extended by drawing on the sheets (ropes attached to the bottom corners of the sail). *tendere* is so used with *carpagn* in Luc. 8, 185; Acta, v. 243. Note also Or. Her. 10, 30 and Verg. Aen. 3, 268, but in these passages it is the wind that extends the sails. *line:* originally meaning "flax", is used to denote various objects made from flax, but apparently only here (the sole occurrence of the word in the tragedies) is it used for "sail". However, the cognate *linteum* is frequently so used (L.s. *linteum* IIS). See Plin. N.H. 19, 3-6 for comments on the use of *limen* in sail-making — and the evil effects thereof! *simul... totum:* the full curve of the bullying sail; cf. *HF* v. 154 and L.S. *simus I.*

321-2. When there was a contrary wind, one of the sheets was carried forward and secured to the bow ("prolato pede"; cf. Plin. N.H. 2, 128) while the after-sheet was trimmed; thus the sail was slanted for tacking. This whole operation was termed *pedem facere* (cf. Verg. Aen. 5, 830). A mosaic

1 Cf. Mohler, pp. 53, 55, where he discusses the present passage.
from Ostia\(^1\) provides a good illustration. It shows two vessels sailing with
the same wind in opposite directions. The ship on the right is sailing with
the wind; for it has "made a foot". Note also the topsails (see on vv. 327-8
below). \textit{transversus} refers to the angle of the wind to the vessel while it
is tacking. \textit{notas}; used for \textit{ventos}, perhaps because this wind is mentioned
in Hor. Od. 1, 3, 14.

323-4. \textit{antennas medias tutas posset male}\(\textsuperscript{1}\); cf. Ep. 78, 3: "\textit{motions ventus
inreorruit malerque est quan expedit, antena summittitur.}" \textit{antennas}; the
yard-arms.

324-5. \textit{in some reginae loco}; when conditions are calmer, the yard-arms are
raised to give more sail.

325. \textit{avides ninimus}; for he runs the risk of a sudden squall. Note the
echo of "\textit{audax ninimum}"; v. 303.

that it was set with the apex below, but the mosaic discussed on vv. 321-2,
proves him wrong. The topsail seems to have come into general use about
30 A.D.\(^2\) Seneca (Ep. 77, 1), referring to the Alexandrian grain-ships
declares, "\textit{nulla sina licet alptra intenderis, quod in alto causa habent
naves ... nulla sine res acque adiuvat cursus quam suum pars vali illine
maxime navis urgeat.}" Cf. also Hor v. 699; Luc. 5, 408-9; Stat. Silv. 3,

\textsuperscript{1} Illustrated by E. Meiggs, \textit{Romen Ostia} (Oxford, 1960), plate 34b.

2, 27. Pliny (Hist. 19, 4) refers to the topsail without naming it. Kingery's assertion (p. 282) that this refers to the ruddy glow of the sunlight is unlikely. There are references to red topsails in Lucian (Nea. 5) and Athenaeus (5, 39). Coloured mainsails also were not uncommon (see Torry, pp. 98-9 for ample documentation).

329-39. Seneca contrasts the happiness before the beginning of navigation with the results of the first sea-voyage. The thought is conventional and in particular Horatian, but Seneca has taken certain details of expression from Ovid. Again he has elaborated on lines in Hor. Od. 1, 3:

nequiquam deus abscedit
prudens Oceanis dissociabili
terras, si tenebam ipsius
non tandem ratae transitum vasa (vv. 21-4).

The idea of the period before sailing, that is implicit in Horace ("prudens", "impia") is developed by Seneca in vv. 329-34.

329-34. The concept of the Golden Age is found as early as Hesiod (Soph. v. 109 ff.). For other descriptions of it in ancient literature see the introductory remarks to this chorus and K.J. Smith, Tibullus, pp. 244-5. The Stoics, who set Nature on a pedestal, understandably took up this idea, particularly Posidonius (see Rap. 90, where Seneca criticizes Posidonius' view that technological progress since the Golden Age was due to the λέγοντας of wise men). The views Seneca expresses on the Golden Age in his prose works are inconsistent. In Rap. 90, 5-7, he accepts the idea, but in Rap. 97, 1, declares "nulla aestas vacavit a culpa" and in Rap. 1, 10, 4, "malos esse nos,
males suisse ... et futurus esset". In the tragedies we have a more detailed description of the Golden Age in Phaed. vv. 525-59.

Richter (followed by Lee) transposed these lines to a position between vv. 308 and 309. This transposition gives a neater chronological order in that all the details of the period before Argo are placed together, but gives a rather inconsequential train of thought "non norat spee / nondum ... sidere norat." The traditional order makes perfectly good sense and is rightly retained by Thomson. We thus have a strong and effective contrast between the periods before and after the first sea-voyage at the heart of the chorus. In the Third Chorus too a moralizing passage occurs in the middle (see vv. 603-6).

331-4. Seneca may well have had in mind here Hor. Od. 1, 1, 11-14, where also a farmer who has nothing to do with the sea is described. Note "patris ... agros" (cf. Med. v. 332); "secat mare" (cf. Med. v. 305); "poribus nauta" (cf. Med. v. 346). The life of the poor farmer is also recommended in HP v. 396 ff.

331. sua quisque ... litera tangens: cf. Phaed. v. 531. "sua quisque norat maria" - "norat" as in Med. v. 334. litera tangens: i.e. not infringing on the "non tangenda ... veda" of Hor. Od. 1, 3, 24. Probably a deliberate reminiscence.

332. senex factus: "venit ad pigros canem senectus", HP v. 195, (note that "pigre" occurs in Med. v. 331). In the prose works, Seneca not infrequently refers to the unpleasant aspects of old age and in Eq. 107, 29 quotes Verg. Geor. 3, 67. "subeunt norti triabique senectus". More in accord with
the present passage is "plena est voluptatis senectus, si illa scias uti" (Ep. 12, 4).

334. varve dives: as Kingery (p. 282) points out a favourite idea in Seneca and Horace. It finds rather similar expression in HF vv. 160-1, "laeta suo/parvoque domus", and Hor. Ep. 2, 1, 139, "agricolae prisci, fortes parvoque beati". Cf. also Hor. Od. 2, 16, 3 and Tib. 1, 1, 25.

334. natale solum: Ovidian; cf. Met. 7, 52; 8, 184; Fast. 1, 3, 35.


335-6: clearly influenced by Hor. Od. 1, 3, 21-2.

335. dissonant foedere mundi: Kingery (p. 282) comments that this phrase, "by association of ideas suggests the regions which under those laws of the universe had been separated from one another". Cf. v. 606 for "foedere mundi". The metaphorical uses of foedere are common, and as early as Lucretius, the phrase "foedere naturali" (1, 586) is found. Cf. also Col. 1, Prouaf. 8, "rapto naturae foedere primo navigio". Thessala rima: Argo (as in Ov. Her. 18, 158), because it was made from a pine felled on Mt. Pelion in Thessaly.

337. verbera pontum: cf. Ov. Her. 18, 23, "dare verbera ponto". verbera: not infrequently used of cars; cf. IS.s. verbera III,10b.

338. partemque naturae fieri nostr: cf. Ov. Pont. 4, 10, 24, "qui quotas terrae pars solest esse mai?", where there is a reference to Scylla in the following line.

339-60: the terrifying dangers through which Argo passed are described. They are introduced (vv. 339-40) as being Argo's punishment, yet the fuller vengeance for the sea's desecration is revealed in vv. 607-69. Vv. 362-3
hint that this vengeance may not yet be complete. Hor. Qg. 1, 3, 17-20, probably spurred this extended description.

341. Sclamum: for this use for the inspirer of the fear, cf. "actus", v. 326. 341-5: the voyage through the Syphacteria, two rocks at the entrance to the Black Sea which dashed together when an object tried to pass them. Cf. vv. 456; 610. Seneca here, seems to have had in mind Hor. Qg. 1, 3, 19-30, "qui vidit mare turbida et infamem acupalco", though these "acupalco" refers to Acronomia. For a very similar description of the Syphacteria, see Hs. vv. 1210-4.

342. Sclamum profundi: for the metaphorical use of Sclamum with reference to the sea, cf. L.f.a. Sclamum II and (in a more specialized military sense) 123.


344. asita: the reading of A, rightly retained by Thomas. The sea that tells the stars in a favourite hyperbole of Silver Age poets: e.g. Pind. v. 1005; M. v. 471; Ias. 5, 625. Cf. Verg. Aen. 3, 507. Further, asita and asita occur together frequently in the tragedies; e.g. Hs. v. 459; Hs. 817. It is true that colloquial speech, when not followed by a pause in the sense, is very rare in Seneca, but it is not unparalleled (e.g. A. v. 79).

346. asita Tiphys: nook echo of v. 316. "paludit asita" occurs in Sen. Qg. 3, 27, 38, also a passage where the dangers of the sea are mentioned.

347. habones: see Th.I.L. habones Abb. for examples of this use in the cone of gabonculus. For other metaphorical uses of the word in the tragedies, see Carter, p. 113.

348. tormento lym: the most striking metaphorical use of tormento in the
tragedies. For other examples see Cantor, p. 110.

349. Argo’s figure-head, made from the talking oak of Dodona, had the power of speech (A.R. 1, 110).

350-60. Seneca has greatly expanded Horace’s “monstra natantia” (Od. 1, 3, 18) in these descriptions of Scylla and the Sirens. The repeated interrogatives (vv. 353; 355) echo the “quae ... quis ... qui” of Hor. Od. 1, 3, 17-9.

350-4: Scylla. Once a beautiful maiden, she was transformed into a monster that lived in the Italian side of the Straits of Messina and harried shipping. In Ep. 92, 9, Seneca quotes the description of Scylla in Verg. Aen. 3, 426-8. A description of Scylla is a favourite set-piece in Latin poets, and since their accounts do not vary greatly, it is difficult to decide whether Seneca has any one source in mind. Ov. Met. 13, 731-3, and Verg. Aen. 6, 74 ff., are closest to the present passage. Actually, Seneca had no illusions about Scylla; cf. Ep. 79, 1: “nam Scyllam maxum esse et quidem non terrible navigantibus optimo scio.”

350. Siculi ... Pelori: as in Ov. Met. 15, 706 Pelorus was the northeast promontory of Sicily.

351. rabides ... canes: most writers agree that Scylla had a girdle of dogs’ heads about her loins. The present phrase is used with reference to Scylla in Lucre. 5, 892 and Ov. Aen. 3, 12, 22.

353-4: note the alliteration of ʃ.
354. Toitae omo: an effective antithesis.

355-60: the Sirens, beautiful maidens who lived on an island in the Aeolian sea and lured sailors to destruction by their sweet singing. The influence of Ov. A.A. 3, 311-2 is clear: "monstrum maris Sirenum erat, quae voces canoris quamlibet admirare detinebat notas." The words underlined above occur in Seneca with but little variation.

357-60. As Kapnikas (p. 115) points out, Seneca's introduction here of the Orpheus motif (cf. vv. 223-9; 626-9), though part of the story, detracts from the present point and results in a clumsy repetition of "suis". Note alliteration in the first words in vv. 359-60.

361-3. Perhaps an echo of Ov. Met. 7, 156-7, where Medea is termed "spolia altera".

361. aurea pellis: a Gyrhic touch: all that effort was expended for gold of a particularly useless kind. Seneca may well be thinking of the ostentatious use of gold in his own day (cf. Ep. 115, 9-14).

362. salus: used of Crella in v. 354. The repetition emphasizes that Medea is more terrible than the sea and all its monsters (cf. vv. 408-10). This line foreshadows Medea's vengeance.

362-3. Note the striking alliteration with m. Kingery's suggestion (p. 263) that this may be accidental, is surely impossible.

363. mareae: Kingery (p. 263) is perhaps right in seeing here a hint of the belief that the voyage of Argo represented the beginning of foreign commerce for the Greeks. Other instances of the metaphorical use of mareae.

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1 Cf. Str. 1, 2, 39; 11, 2, 19.
occur at *Troy*, vv. 209, 358; *Odyssey*, v. 105; *Octavius*, v. 601 (note that in all these passages except *Troy* v. 358, *pretium* is also associated with it). For instances in the prose works, see Steyng (p. 101) and for other financial metaphors, see p. 39 above. The collocation of "*salum*" and "*merces*" would probably remind the audience of "*sala merx*", the colloquial term of abuse common in Plautus (see *LS.* *merx*, III). *prima...carina*: as in v. 665 and *Octavius*, 6, 721.

364-79. Seneca leaves the period of the Argonauts and has the chorus anachronistically refer to the ease of sea-travel and of intercourse between nations that existed in his own day (vv. 364-74) and then foretell the discovery of new lands (vv. 374-9).

364. *Palladia venus*: see on v. 2.

365. *leges*: in one sense picks up "*leges*", v. 319, but in a slightly different sense, continues the metaphor in "*cessit*" (cf. *LS.* *I* *sed*, II3a), with the meaning of peace-conditions (cf. *LS.* *lex*, III2).

367. *rem*: see on v. 169.

369-73. These references to the foundation of new cities and the mobility of peoples would of course have special significance for Seneca, born in Corduba.

371-2. *nil qua fuerat sedes reliquit... pervius orbis*; these lines suggest once more a certain respect for the "*bene dissequi seceda mundi*". Seneca’s equivocal attitude here is in accord with his views on the mingling of peoples in *Naos*, 5, 18, 4. (quoted on p. 72 above).

372-3. *Indus valida* / *potat Araxen* etc.: this way of referring to people
who reach a land, or the inhabitants of a land is frequent (see 18, e.
life 13). The closest parallel in Seneca is Epist. v. 57-6, "quare gelidum/
potat Araxen". Note also Try. v. 9; Cud. v. 427; Ag. v. 321; Phoen. v. 127.
It is interesting that in Verg. Bk. 1, 62, "aut Araxim Partius bibat, aut
Samania Tigrin" is a guarantee of the impossible.
372-4. "The names are selected to represent the ends of the earth"
(Kingsley, p. 264).
374-9. These lines were traditionally supposed to refer to the discovery of
America and in one manuscript, apparently that of Ferdinand Columbus, the
following marginal note was written: "Hacce prophetia ampliss. est per patron
novm Kristoforum Colon, almirantem, anno 1492". Some critics see a reference
here to Claudius' expedition to Britain in 43-6 A.D. This may be too
precise an interpretation, but the lines surely do reflect Rome's activity
in this area, under Claudius and perhaps Nero. Seneca also heralds a future
extension of knowledge in Nat. 7, 30, 5, "multa venientia aceris popus us ignota
nobis scint; multa saeculis tunc futuris cum memoria nostri exalvelet
reservaturn". See also on v. 374.
374-5. venient amnis/ secus saecus, saedus: perhaps a blend of Verg. Agm.
1, 283-4, "veniet lustris labentes actas/ cum ...", and Cn. Nat. 7, 29,
"aero venit usus ab amnis." Cf. also Nat. 7, 25, 4-5, where "veniet tempe
que" occurs twice, also in anticipation of future discoveries.
376. vincula venas lapic: Curtis C. Bushnell's assertion that the metaphor

1 As quoted by Kapmukajus, p. 122.
is of opening a door is unconvincing. The idea is clearly of a freeing from bonds; cf. Sen. **Suas.** 1, 4, where we find with reference to Oceanus, "dubitans utranque terras velut vinculum circumfluat." Note also Oed. v. 505.

379. **ultima Thule:** as in Verg. **Geor.** 1, 30. The Masalian explorer Pythias (c. 300 B.C.) was the first to gather information about this island, which he described as lying six days' sail north of Britain and one day from the frozen sea. Probably it was Norway or Iceland, though the Thule seen by Agricola's fleet (Tac. **Ag.** 10, 6) was probably one of the Shetlands, **vii.**

_Act Three (vv. 380-578)_

This act also may be divided into two scenes: first (vv. 380-430), we have a short domina-mutrix scene, then follows the scene between Hecuba and Jason (vv. 431-578).

(Scene One)

380-96: after briefly urging Hecuba to calm herself (vv. 380-1), the Nurse depicts her mistress' wild demeanour and expresses fear about her intentions (vv. 382-96).

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1 In "A note on Seneca, Medea 378-382", TAPA, 33 (1902), viii, Bushnell, feeling rightly that "rerum" means the whole world, argues that an imprisonment metaphor is impossible, since this would refer only to the inhabitants of the known world. However, Oceanus imprisons those outside it as effectively as those within. Besides, there is no parallel for the use of *vincula* to mean "door".

2 Cf. the introductory note to Act Two, scene one.

381. ingesta: see note on v. 157.

382-90: for such descriptions, see on vv. 186-7. The present lines and vv. 653-61 show many similarities to the description of the angry man in de Ira 1, 1, 3-4, a passage which merits quotation here in an abbreviated form: “neut furens certa idea sunt audax et minax vultus, tristis from, tecta facies, citatus gradus, inquieta mentes, color versus, cerebrum et vehementius aetas suspicat, ita irascant ouden: indigni ac miscant oculi, multus ore tota rubor ... spiritus coactus ... geritus magnusque et param: explanatis vocibus sermo praeruptus ... ‘magnasque irae minas agens’.” Cf. also de Ira 2, 55, 2; 3, 4, 1-2. Note also that Deianira is described by her nurse (H v. 233-53) in terms very similar to the descriptions of Hesia here and in vv. 107-10; 233-61.

382-4. Hesia calls herself “magnea” in v. 806 and is so called by the chorus in v. 549. Other named similar occur at H v. 233-5; Iliad. vv. 673-6. Use of this named-image to convey frenzy is something of a cliché in ancient literature, nor does Seneca enliven the image with the artistry and imagination of a Vergil (Aen. 4, 301 ff.) or Horace (Od. 3, 25, 9 ff.).

382. enoneo crescis: cf. “enoneo gradus” (Iliad. v. 674).

383. recte ... dixit: the frenzy of the malevus was regarded as an indwelling of Dionysus. Cf. Hor. Od. 2, 19, 6; 3, 25, 1-2; H v. 233-4.

1. Hagengogis (p. 39) points out that the betrayed Hesia and the betrayed Deianira are virtually the same character, commenting “In Riesenflasche Verschwinden die Feinden der Mannen”.
384. *Pindi nivali vertice:* also the haunt of amsades in *Od.* vv. 434-5; "Threicio/ vertice Pindi". *Nysea:* a mountain and town in India. It is probable that two different gods, a Thracian and a Phrygian deity, were combined in Dionysus.

385: again reminiscent of the fragment of *Ovid's Medea,* quoted on v. 123.

386. *Lymphatis:* the Greeks believed that the nymphs when angry could drive men mad. *Lymphatus* was coined from *lympha* to represent Υυμπάθεια. From Pausanias on (frg. 122 R.), the word is used in connection with Dionysiac ecstasy.

387. *flamata facies:* her inflamed face mirrors her blazing anger (vv. 410, 412). See the note on "caustus" (v. 390) for a discussion of five imagery in *Med.* Metaphors from *fire* are more commonly used by Seneca to express passionate emotions than to describe physical appearance, but other examples of the latter use occur at v. 858; *Od.* v. 958; *Id.* v. 251.

388. *Facies:* Kingery's suggestion (p. 255) that this is accusative plural is implausible; as Kingery himself notes, the plural is very rare in the present sense. Thomann's punctuation (semi-colon after "facies") accords with the staccato style in which Medea's other symptoms are described, "Facies" then in nominative and *aet* is omitted (cf. on v. 19). *exalte:* this phrase is frequently used by Seneca and others to refer to the depths of the body or spirit (see *Th.L.L.* s. *altus* II; here with "spiritum ... citat", the meaning is clearly physical. However the phrase is also used of the sea (cf. *Th.L.L.* s. *altus* III and "ab alto", *Tr.* v. 202), and hence foreshadows the wave metaphors in v. 397.

389. *remidet:* this unexpected word gains emphasis from its position, as
does the equally incongruous "renidet" in Cat. 39, 2; 4; 6 - a passage which
Seneca may have had in mind, for there too, the contrast is with fletus
(v. 3); note also "flet" (v. 5). Medea's grin may be a purely physical
spasm, but may also reflect the prospective pleasure of revenge (see notes
on vv. 50; 991-2). The maenad-image with its connotations of ecstasy has
helped prepare the way for the word. omnis specimen affectus capitis: cf.
HQ vv. 252-3, "et formas dolor/ errat per omnes", a sentence which Regenbogen
(p. 31) feels epitomizes the themes of all Seneca's plays. affectus: de-

dined by Seneca (Ep. 75, 12); "affectus sunt motus animi improbales,
subiti et concitati", and adds "qui frequentes neglectique facere mactum".
That this is true in Medea's case is suggested by the Nurse's comment
"hrae novimus veteris notas" (v. 394).

390-1. Thomass rightly retains the manuscript line-order and adopts the
readings of A, "verget", "ponet".

390: cf. HQ v. 253, "queritur, implorat, gemit". aestuat: frequently
used of the passionate emotions (cf. HQ v. 1339 and Th. L. I. s. aestuo II 1).
It is not always possible to decide whether the source of the metaphor is
heat or the sea. Since in this scene we have sea-imagery in vv. 392,
411-2 and fire imagery in vv. 387, 410, 412-3, it is likely that by
"aestuat" Seneca intends to invoke both ideas. There is a similar blurring
of imagery in vv. 942-3 (cf. also vv. 408-14). The images of fire and
sea-storm are indeed frequent in Medea, particularly to convey the violence

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Pratt, "Senecan Melodrama", p. 215, notes the mixing of metaphors and
comments, "This is Seneca's Medea: a flaming storm of passion."
These figurative uses are given special force by lines depicting the destructive force of fire (e.g. vv. 35-6; 147-48) or the dangers of the sea (e.g. vv. 361-79). Yet fire and sea are well-worn sources of imagery to depict strong passion.

391. *quo pondus animi versant*; cf. Inc. 8, 380: "exprobant mentisque meas quo pondem versant". For other examples in the tragedies of the metaphorical use of *pondus* and for other metaphors from the balance, see Carter, p. 124 and note "Libratus" v. 401. *禹* *pondet mires*: it is preferable to take *"pondet"* in the sense of *depono* (cf. L.S. *pontum* III 16), than to accept Miller's "vals" (p. 261), a use for which there is no clear parallel. With this interpretation of *"pondet"*, it is perhaps better to take "uid" (vv. 391, 392) in the temporal sense.

392. *et sequ... fluctus pompest*: this seems to be the only metaphorical use of the phrase, though it occurs in similar in Cic. *Fast. *9, 16, 6; Inc. 6, 266; Quint. 9, 4, 7. In these similar and in the non-figurative examples listed in *Thal. *(s. *fluctus* II 18a, 6), the phrase is used with reference to the destruction of the wave's force. Here then the nurse means: "When will Medea's wrath be checked? It has passed its normal limits."
another metaphor from the sea. Cf. Od. v. 926, "exundat dolor"; de Ira 1, 7, 1, "temperare iram ... coque destructo quod exundat, ad salutarem modum cogere".

394. irae veteris: see note on vv. 134-6. notas: for other examples of this common metaphorical use, see LS.s. nota III. A rather different metaphorical use of the word occurs at v. 906. For other nota metaphors in the tragedies, see Carter (p. 111) and in the prose works, see Steyne (pp. 101, 149).

395. magnum aliquid instat: rather reminiscent of Medea's forebodings in Ov. Her. 12, 212, "nescioquid certe mea mea malus agit".

396. vultum furoris: for this use, cf. de Ira 3, 4, 1, "nulli certe adselis prior est vultus". Presumably at this point, Medea approaches closer.

397-425. Medea in self-address indicates the determination and ferocity of her resolve for revenge; then, after criticizing Jason for not attempting to defer her banishment, she asserts that nonetheless one day is enough for her purpose.

397-8: Just as Medea's love had known no limit, so now she should set no limit to her hate. statusmodum: Friedrich (p. 11) points out that modum in this phrase means "limit" not "measure" (the interpretation of Leo, 2, 379), and cites as parallels Thy. v. 463; HE v. 206 and several passages from other authors.

398. ego ut: this phrase is used to introduce a sharp rejection of an unwelcome or unreasonable suggestion or command.\(^1\) Friedrich (p. 12) finds

\(^1\) Cf. Med. vv. 893; 929; HE vv. 372; 1187; Phoen. v. 586; Oed. v. 671.
the phrase difficult here, for if we translate "imitare amorem" as "imitate your love", there is nothing in the text to spur the angry "ego me ut". However, we have already noted the extent to which Seneca relies on the skill of his actors or declaimers to convey, and the quickwittedness of his audience to appreciate sudden shifts in idea or mood. Particularly relevant is v. 136, where the recollection of "infelix amor" leads Medea to abandon her threats against Jason and with loving understanding to excuse his conduct. With "imitare amorem" Seneca raises the possibility of a similar change of heart. The disclaimer would pause after this phrase to suggest that Medea was once more being softened by the recollection of her past love. This time however, she angrily rejects her unspoken thought as weakness.

399. hic... dies: see on v. 1016.

400. tanto petitus ambitu, tanto datu: "petitus" and "ambitus", are both metaphors from the sphere of political campaigning. tanto datu: the image shifts somewhat. The day was sought by Medea as a candidate seeks the vote; from Croom's viewpoint the day is given like an election bribe to win Medea's acquiescence.

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1 Therefore Friedrich translates "imitare amorem" by "feign love" and ascribes "si quaeris ... amorem" to the Nurse since Medea nowhere else in this scene shows any fluctuation of feeling.

2 See above p. 39 for other political metaphors in Med. and Cæsar (p. 117) for such metaphors in the other tragedies. For the relevant use of peto, see Iæc. peto III2b.
401-6. For similar assertions that a situation or emotion will last as
long as the sure laws of nature, cf. Hor. vv. 1576-80; Ovid. vv. 506-9, and
K.F. Smith (pp. 263-4) on Tib. I, 4, 65-6. Such affirmations of permanence
are very close to the common uxorom, for examples of which, see Carter
p. 61 and note also the examples given in Sen. Cont. 1, 5, 2. Senses,
and though he is of uxorom and the like, nowhere exhibits the skill and
individuality of the nature Horace or Vergil; the instances of perpetuity
he here adduces are commonplace. However there is an effective contrast
between the same order of the universe and Lydia's "furor" which she claims
will consist with it. It should further be noted that in v. 732 ff., Lydia
by her magic, upsets almost all the examples of perpetuity that she gives
here—Lydia's "furor" is even more powerful than the laws of nature.

401. furor... uxorom: the Stoics regarded the earth as being in the centre
of the universe surrounded by air. Cf. Cic. Tusq. 5, 2, 69; Flin. Nat. 2, 4, 10-1. uxorom: more often used of the earth in this context. Cf.

1 Note however that Carter includes there certain passages that are not
strictly uxorom; Trin. vv. 556-62; Theoc. vv. 930-5; Hor. vv. 1377-95 and
the present passage.

2 Cf. Hor. Od. 3, 30, 7-9; Verg. Aen. 9, 646-9.

3 With v. 402, cf. vv. 757-61, 763-9; with "solem ... astra" (vv. 403-4), cf.
vv. 757-8; with "des airs ... rackets", cf. vv. 758-9; with "flumina ... cedent", cf. v. 762. Only "numerumque heredis derit" (v. 403) lacks a
parallel, for v. 401 seems at least partially vitiated by the immersion of
the Bore in the sea (v. 758) and the tottering of the Hyades (v. 769).
402. The language of this line accords with the reverent attitude of the Stoics towards the heavenly bodies.

403. transverse horrida spatii: not used elsewhere by Seneca in altane or other expressions of perpetuity. Grains of sand and stars are frequently used together in similes expressing the inexpressible; perhaps their association in that rhetorical commonplace has led Seneca to use them both in a rather different way, here.

404-4. solea dies poste ostrea: a similar point occurs in a list of altane at Phaed., v. 86-7.

405-5. dum sineas soleas/ versibil grutes: because of their position in the sky, the stars do not appear to sink into the ocean when setting (hence "sineas") - a point made by writers from Homer (I., 16, 487-9) on, and occurring in altane and like expressions in the tragedies at Ph., v. 477; Oed. v. 509; N. v. 281; 1563, Grutes: see note on vv. 214-5.

407-10. The linking of a character with various wild beasts, mythical monsters or other symbols of cruelty is a frequent feature of abuse in ancient literature. Most frequently occurring in the form that the abused person's mother was e.g. a licencce, Scylla, or rock. However, Scylla triumphantly applies the traditional formula to herself (perhaps influenced by L., 241, v. 1388-9).

408. Charybdis: traditionally a monster opposite Scylla on the Sicilian shoals.

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1. Cf. Pl. Euthyd. 294b; Cat., 7, 3 ff.; 61; 199-201.

2. The first appearance is in P., 16, 33 ff. Other noteworthy examples are L., Oed., v. 1342-3; Cat., 80, 1 ff.; 64, 154-6; Ov., N., 7, 20-2; Verg. Aen., 4, 366 f. For further examples, see the note on the last passage by K. L., Euthyd., P. Varro, Terrae Marinas, Amiculae Libor Guarriae (Harvard, 1935).
side of the straits.\(^1\) In Ep. 79, 1, Seneca asks Lucilius for further information about Charybdis. Note that in that letter, Seneca refers to the three phenomena (Scylla, Charybdis, Astrea) here mentioned. *Scylla.*

110. *Titans:* probably as Kingery (n. 236) suggests a reference to the giant Eneas, who is buried under Astrea (cf. Verg., *Aen.* 3, 571). Theocritus (p. 268) sees a reference to the monster Typhon, whom some authorities (e.g. Ov., *Met.* 5, 348) assert, suffered the same fate. However, Seneca clearly has Eneas buried under Astrea in *Herc.* vv. 1157-9 and Typhon under Inarix in *Herc.* v. 1156. Seneca frequently uses *Titans* to refer to the giants.\(^2\) *Aphelantes:* the parting of the fire-breathing giant was supposed to cause eruptions (cf. *Herc.* 21, 3, 4, 75-6). *Servabit* while the immediate reference is to Astrea's volcanic fire (cf. *Thy.* v. 583), it is frequently used of passions such as hate (cf. *Iliad.* v. 392) and anger (cf. *Herc.* v. 946) and its use with "mines" homers hone the point of the comparison.

44. *rapidas ventus:* cf. vv. 593-5. *precoluisse:* only used here in the tragedies. Found with "here" also in *Val.* Fl. 3, 621.

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\(^1\) L.C. Postgate, * Reality and Allegory in the Odyssey* (Amsterdam, 1959), pp. 35-46, argues persuasively that Homer got the inspiration for Scylla and Charybdis from volcanic phenomena in the Lipari Isles. However that may be, in later antiquity, Scylla and Charybdis were sited in the straits between Italy and Sicily. Some (e.g. Cattin, p. 83) identify Charybdis with some swirling currents off the Sicilian coast.

\(^2\) Cf. Miller (2, 54) for other examples.

413-4. Medea seems to be responding to the Nurse's plea in v. 381. This supports the Neo reading "Inhibitae" against Leo's "imitati".

415-21. Medea subjects the excuse she earlier found for Jason (v. 137 ff.) to a more critical examination.

415-6: as so often in Seneca (cf. also v. 157 ff) a general truth provides the answer to a particular problem.

417. sequitur ... depicto: cf. "pleasit", v. 236. depictum nuncius: in its original use (cf. Trac. v. 153), the phrase refers to captives offering their hands to be bound. See Th.M. s. l. de (alludit) "Alba.

417-9. Cleopatra (p. 53) corporis l. [sed], vv. 585-7. There, however, Medea's complaint is that Jason did not disclose to her his plans earlier. Seneca's point is entirely different and Euripidean influence here seems unlikely. These lines help stimulate interest in Medea's excuse with Jason. They raise the possibility that if Jason can surprise Medea by visiting her, he may weaken before her invitation to flee with her.

419. form: perhaps an echo of the ironical use of form for Theseus in Cat. 64, 73; 247.


421. genera: said with a sneer. Cf. vv. 246, 451. Seneca is fond of using terms expressing relationship in an ironical manner. 1

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1 Cf. Aniker, p. 119, note 112.
picks up Green's words in v. 295. In v. 422ff. she echoes the reply she
gave in vv. 296-7.

421-2: another ambiguous reference to the children. Balikes (p. 110, note 101) refers to Gom. 5.34. 14, 2, where Saraces mentions L. Ribulus who re-
turned to his duties the very day after he heard of the death of his two sons
with the comment "quis minus potest quam urae dies absens illis dare?"

423. multum potestis: cf. I. 15. 3: "sapientias multum potest vita"
and L. 153. pag. 119.

423. hic faciat dies: as in 150 v. 1713. For other instances where dies
is the subject of a transitive verb, cf. vv. 223; 424; 749; Thuk. 2. 8. 14.


425-6: good Stoic advice. The Stoics stressed the need for absence of
emotion, 

For other cases where characters in the grip of
passion are urged to save their souls, cf. vv. 506; 539-40; 558-9; 155.

vv. 224-5.

425-8: not infrequently in the tragedies, characters in the grip of anger
give no thought to their own safety, provided they can destroy their enemies.

Of. Ag. vv. 199-202; Th. vv. 196-7; Hr. v. 350; de I. 1, 1; 1, 52. For
similar ideas in other writers, cf. Leo (1, 153).

427-8. Note an emphatic anaphora of "securi".

429-30: a point already made by the Nurse in v. 166 and repeated by Jason
in v. 494.

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1 Best illustrated in the tragedies by Hercules's desecmbr on the pyre
   (Hr vv. 1780-4).
430. Cf. Pue. Syr. v. 531, "potenti iuxi aibi periculum est quaereo."

Scena Two (vv. 431-578)

In this scene, Medea makes a vain attempt to persuade Jason to flee with her, then clearly determines to punish him through their children and plans the destruction of his bride. Seneca here has telescoped into one, two scenes from Euripides' Medea (vv. 446 ff.; 566 ff.). Much of the material stems from Euripides, though verbal similarities are comparatively few.

431-46. Friedrich (pp. 6-10) has pointed out that Jason's entry differs in two respects from Seneca's normal practice. First, neither the nurse nor Medea introduces Jason, nor does he name himself. Secondly at the end of his entry speech, Jason does not address Medea first. Friedrich (p. 11) concludes that Seneca here has failed to integrate Jason's speech into its dramatic setting. However Jason's identity is surely clear from his words and Seneca's technique may reflect a desire to avoid repeating the pattern adopted at Creon's entry.

431. circu fate ... mortem aperit: the adjective used of fate in the tragedies are almost always pejorative (see Brady, p. 32). Given their subject-matter this is natural enough. Jason's opening words do however aptly sum up his passive attitude to life.


2. Cf. note on v. 256 ff.

3. See note on vv. 445-6 for further difficulties.
432. Cf. Phoc. vv. 34-5, "Terme/ cum occidit et omne parvus".
433-4. quadra... parvis perrum: probably an echo of Sen. Contcr. 6, 17.
2: "quadra: resedum praevia ipsa parvis perrum". quadra: a common
enough metaphor (cf. L5.a. 158.21), occurring elsewhere in the tragedies
at Od. v. 515, Iph. v. 642. For other metaphors from medicine and sickness,
see p. 32 above and Carter, pp. 110, 113. In view of the frequency of such
images in the prose works (see Steyne, pp. 51-70) and Seneca's frequent
illnesses, 1 it is surprising there are not more examples in the tragedies.
434-7: note the parallelism of structure and the repetition of forms of
fide in the end of vv. 436, 436, 437. 2 These lines make it clear that
Jason has not (as in Euripides) achieved his way into the second marriage,
but has given way to the strong pressure exerted on him by Creon.
437-41. Jason's argument that he is marrying for his children's sake is
also stressed in vv. 443, 507, 509. Euripides' Jason makes a similar point
(vv. 547-55, 595-7) but that Jason seems more concerned with self-perpetuation
and self-aggrandizement through his children.
437-8. non ille... est trudit epietan: this assertion that he does not
fear for himself is unconvincing; cf. vv. 101, 527.
438. mitern: used of parental affection, as in vv. 546, 943-4. 3

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1 Cf. Ep. 26; 53; 54, 55; 65; 77; 78; 106; Deae. Haly. 19, 2.
2 For similar repetitions, cf. vv. 506-5 and Carter, p. 158.
3 See Brady (pp. 202-4) for a discussion of the uses of the word in the
tragedies.
439-40. Justitia had a temple built in her honour by Augustus in A.D. 13 (cf. Ov. Fast. 3, 6, 25). She is also mentioned as a goddess in Oct. vv. 397-8; 425. For the Stoics, justice was one of the four cardinal virtues; Chrysippus (R.V.F. 3, 126) asserted that it stemmed from Zeus and Nature; and for Seneca it was "sacra rosa" (Ep. 113, 31).

442. Aug.: Center (p. 119) strangely classes this as an example of "slavery of love"; it surely belongs with examples given (leg. cit.) that express domination in general.

443: rather heavy dramatic irony.

444. preceding... aggregii: cf. Tac. Ann. 13, 37 and L.i.e. aggregii III: for similar examples.

445-6. Medea had greeted Creon equally aggressively (vv. 186-7). The dramatic force of her violent rage on seeing Jason, is weakened by the fact that the Nurse has already described her as being in a paroxysm of anger (vv. 382-96). Latum in valle est dolor: occure in same line-position in Ag. v. 126; and with but little variation in Med. v. 217. For the idea of, vv. 386, 389. Kendell (p. 92) notes with disapproval the fact that Jason comments on Medea's appearance without her appearing to hear him. Miller (1, 265) and Hadas (p. 23) avoid this and the further difficulty that Jason and Medea don't seem to see one another for fifteen lines by having Medea exit at v. 422 and re-enter at v. 443. But this is unnecessary - there are very many instances in Roman comedy of characters being not seen or heard by other characters on the stage.

447-89. Medea's opening speech is a skilful, well-ordered bit of rhetoric, yet its effect is weakened by the fact that she has used much of the material.

1 Medea (New York, 1958).
in earlier speeches.

447. Most translators (e.g. Thomas, p. 221) regard "fugīus ... fugīus" as both presents, however if the first verb is present, we have a tribunus in the first foot and this would break two of the rules formulated by Stracelòck 1 in his exhaustive study of Seneca's Isidore tribunus; that a word-ending cannot occur at the end of the tribunus; and that loci and accent must coincide when a tribunus occurs in this position. Stracelöck views both verbs as perfects but this requires the deletion of "hac" to avoid an enaspect in the fourth fact. Coffey's support of Wernberg's interpretation ("fugius ... fugius") is convincing. 2

Craigy (p. 54) thinks that Helen's opening words are too abrupt to be natural, but surely Seneca here again reveals his understanding of the psychology of anger. The jerksness of the opening lines suggest that Helen is almost incoherent with rage; and she immediately pours out her grievances. 3

449. saltem fugere: this use of solere approaches the rhetors' trick of treating something which has happened once or twice as being a regular practice. 4 For a triumphant echo of the present phrase, cf. v. 1322.

450. venatibus: see on "laris", v. 23.

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1. De Senecae tribus locis opusculorum selectis (Cressw, 1930), p. 70.

2. Coffey, p. 171.

3. Note the verbal stress on her flight in vv. 447-50: "fugīus ... fugīus"; "fugiusi"; "fugere"; "profugere".

4. Cf. Sen. Cntn. 1, 1, 17; 7, 5, 15; 9, 25, 4-5. 1ac (1, 150) notes several examples in the tragedies, among them Med. v. 541.
451-60: Medea has no place of refuge, a clear echo of E. Med. vv. 503-15 (especially vv. 503-4). Cf. also Osm. Med. (fug. 10 (R)). Note the extended list of rhetorical questions.

451. at quo: this exclamation by Leo seems to have more rhetorical point (particularly in view of the repetition in v. 459), than the line "et quos", retained by Tlumax.

453. arma: this seems to reflect a different version of the story from that given in v. 123. See note on vv. 130-1. arma petit; teneo inque: quoted in Quint. 9, 2, 8, to illustrate the use of the rhetorical question to cast odium on the person addressed.

455. ruveste noblese reges manus: an echo of her earlier claim (v. 236).

456. adulterae: both then, for he had deserted Hypsipyle, and now. The twist gained effect from its line-position and the contrast with "nobiles reges manus". Note that in A.n., Argo returns through Central Europe, not the Symplegades.

457. Iolcas: here Pelias had been murdered (see on vv. 123-4). personae: a sneer at Jason's home-town; in Tog. v. 419, it is "heres vasta demotrix Iolcas". Teneo: Medea ironically supposes she will settle in that well-known beauty-spot. Teneo: something of a stock epithet with Teneo; cf. Hor. 24, 1, 7, 4; Ov. Met. 7, 222. Senec. has a marked fondness for geographical epithets; see p. 27 above.

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2 Since Quint. attributes these words to "Seneca", and since "Seneca" elsewhere in Quint., with one possible exception, refers to Seneca the philosopher, it seems perverse to deny that the latter wrote Medea. See further p. 72 above.
456. sound riius: for other examples of this phrase, see Tim. 2. 3. 12 and (with a slightly different meaning) 3. 3. 3. riaa, clausa.

457. cf. v. 109 and Tim. 3. clausa Ltd.

458. small, scilicet: most use of paremmneda.

460. rages... genus: for "rages" cf. the Latin in v. 463, for "genus", cf. vv. 240, 421.

461-2. disser explicat ingenio/peccati: cf. vv. 236-7, "suntilla flagitia ingenio/ fata tera". In neither passage are Medea's words to be taken at their face-value. pedigius: usually a term of reproach used of a rival (as in v. 920), but here and in v. 495 applied by Medea to herself. Note alliteration of p.

464. appox: perhaps as Kingsley (p. 233) suggests, Medea was thinking of the Telliumae. See the description in Sall. Cat. 55, 3 ff.

465. meritis: probably at first Medea sarcastically means the word in the sense of "deserts", but then thinks of the other meaning, "services", and this makes her to medini Jason of these services in vv. 465-76. "Meritis", "caput" echo Jason's words in vv. 435-6.

465-76: cf. E. Leg. vv. 476-47, though there the mendigam and meritor are not mentioned. Ovid refers to Jason's tasks at Colchis in several passages (Met. 7, 100-58, Ix. 6, 32 ff.; 12, 31-50; 93 ff.). Senean's vocabulary here shows signs of Ovid's influence, particularly of the last passage. It is difficult to be sure whether Senean had in mind the other passages, since Ovid repeats himself in phrase as well as these.

466. revolut, ansaeus: cf. Oed. v. 764; Ag. v. 164. Jason... baldius cf. v. 341.
467-8. Leo deleted these lines on the grounds that v. 467 is a gloss on v. 469 and v. 468 a gloss on v. 466.¹ This is no doubt a stylistic improvement, but is probably not what Seneca wrote; the tragedies like the prose works reveal a taste for such repetitions.

468. amiger: for this use “de augele Caduce”, cf. Claud. Gemm. Phil. v. 324 and note the similar use of amiger in Prop. 9, 13, 10. Cf. also v. 930.

469. additi: used in same context in Ov. Her. 12, 96; 6, 36.

470. Cf. Ov. Met. 7, 141, “terribilisque percutit per aures vulnera fratres”.

471. Purified violently: Pericles had been carried on the van’s back to Colchis; see T. v. 1034 ff.

472-3. Perhaps based on Ov. Met. 7, 155, “scena in ignotos oculos alibi venit”. Note the parentheses “scena ... invenit”, words in the same sphytiac line position. engyne: in E. Her. v. 432, the beast is killed not drugged.

474. Once again, the brother’s death provides Seneca with an opportunity for ingenious if tasteless wit. Cf. vv. 47-6; 467.

475. natam: see on v. 133.

476. non revolutus: unlike Deson. Seneca affects this skillful use of the future participle, especially with reference to the inevitability of death. What is at first sight a cliché is given point when it is realized that on previous occasions the person in question has returned from the Unterworld.

¹ See on vv. 1012-3.
(cf. v. 632; HP v. 1226; Hagg. v. 1242) or a similar procedure has surprisingly failed to kill another (as here).

477. Most editors, following Lee, place this line after v. 482, feeling that it makes better sense with the passage referring to the wealth Medea gave up (vv. 483-6). However Thomson rightly retains the line's order. As she refers to the kingdom she has lost for Jason's sake (v. 477), Medea thinks by contrast of Jason's "certain base" and bursts into a passionate entreaty (vv. 478-82). Then in v. 484 she returns to the theme begun in v. 477. This traditional line-order accords well with the stress of consciousness technique that Medea adopts in several of Medea's speeches (see on vv. 26-36). Note the emphatic contrast between "aliens" and "meat".

align: for Jason.

478-82. See p. 56 above for such entreaties, per quos, per te quibus; num-
num negotio. Quint's usus (9, 2, 95) on the abuse of entreaties seems appropriate here; "non queritur seden quid sententias gratie iurat, nudi al potest tan bene quam Daemonis". Note the alliteration of q and the jingling sound-effect of "perpeti parque ... per asclepem".

481. regnum haec vidit: cf. v. 57. Medea's wedding took place on the island of the Phaeacians according to A.B. 4, 1136 ff.


483. Zariphe: used here and in v. 563 for the Caledians.

485. gigan: a word of Persian origin, with suggestions of oriental splendour. giga ... gigan: for a similar example where a noun in apposition to a relative previous lends precision to the antecedent, cf. Cat. 36, 2-3, "dolore ... quo desiderius" and Fortyc's note (p. 334). Wilamowitz's
widely adopted emendation, "gaza", seems unnecessary.

486. ornatus auro nemore: the golden fleece was hung on a tree. This explanation smacks of the colors of the declaimers.

487. nihil exul tuli: an echo of "solum hoc ... extuli" (v. 225). The urge to make a point involves Medea in a slight inconsistency.


488-9: another highly rhetorical sententia: note the anaphora, asyndeton culminating in a climax, alliteration in p., parenoemia ("patria ... pater") and the jingling effect of "pater, frater."

489. hae dote nupti: probably an echo of Ov. Hor. 12, 199-203; rede ducenti sua: cf. vv. 246; 272-3; 482. sua: i.e. her "dowry".

490. Cleasby (p. 54) feels that the abruptness of Jason's reply indicates that Seneca has not properly integrated these lines with the preceding speech of Medea. But how was Jason to reply to such a tirade? His cautious attempt to point out that he has done his best is quite true to life.


494. gravis ira regum est secur: Jason speaks from experience of Pellas, Acestes and Ascanius. For the sentiment, cf. v. 430; Hes vv. 342-4; Oed. v. 519; Ag. v. 282; Iph. 1, 12. Jason is picking up Medea's "regalis ira" in v. 463.

496. amores: spurred by "paeciscam", but echoing the sound of "amoves".
497. Cf. v. 237, "obici crimen ... potest".

498. *restat hoc unum*; as in v. 37.

500-3. See note on vv. 272-80 (especially vv. 278-9). Medea here reflects the importance the Stoics placed on men's intentions and the consequent idea that the responsibility for crime does not rest with the actual perpetrator alone.\(^1\) Cf. *Ske 3*, 299; *Trp*. vv. 290-1; *Hd* v. 994. Note how Medea angrily repeats Jason's words, "tuus ... sceleribus ... nocens" (v. 499) and refutes them one by one, "tua ... tua" (v. 500); "scalus" (v. 500); "nocens" (v. 503). 500. *tua illa, tua sunt illa*; a striking use of *conduplicatio* to express Medea's excitement. The anaphora "solus ... solus" (v. 502) serves the same purpose.

501-3. Cf. Ov. *Heg.* 12, 131: "ut culpem alii, tibi ne laudare necesse est/pro quo sum totiens esse coacta nocens." Cf. also v. 280 above. Note that in *Phoen.*, vv. 204-5, "insentem voca" and "innocens" occur in the same line-position as here, though the idea is different.

504-5. *est cuius acceptae pudet*; for other (though less extended) repetitions of the same words at the end of successive lines, cf. *Hg* v. 896; *Trp*. v. 335; *Canter*, p. 159.

506-7: see on vv. 425-6.

507. *abdico eiuro abhinc*; cf. Pisc. v. 342 (R); "te repudio nec recipio: naturam abdico, facessae". For *abdico* in sense of disown, cf. LS.s. *abdico* IIIA. For *eiuro* in same sense, see *Cons. Marc.* 19, 2; *Heg.* 6, 4, 2; LS.s. *eiuro* II2.

509. This point is also made by Jason in *K. Heg.* vv. 547-68; 595-7. Seneca though has given the idea a rhetorical sharpness with his neat use of chiasmus.

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\(^1\) Cf. Brady, pp. 194-5.
510. non: for this negative with the jussive subjunctive, see W.S. McGuinness1 on Verg. Aen. 12, 78.

511. miscen: as Maliker (p. 113) observes. Seneca often uses miscen to suggest something monstrous, e.g. HP v. 388; Tro. v. 98; Ag. vv. 36; 201; Thy. v. 52; Pheen. v. 342. prole ... prolem: cf. "neptes ... nepotibus" (v. 512) and Canter, p. 161 for other examples of this type of paronomasia where the same word is repeated in different cases.

512: an echo of E. Med. vv. 404-6. Again Seneca has given rhetorical point to the idea (cf. on v. 509). Sicyphi: kingery (p. 290) feels that Sisyphus' offspring deserve the term "foeda" because he (the founder of Corinth) was descended from the Titan Iapetus. It is more likely however that Medea is thinking of Sisyphus' role as one of the "Great Sinners": cf. v. 747 and Page (p. 102) on E. Med. v. 405.

516. hinc Rex et illine: Jason means Creon and Acastus (cf. v. 521) but Medea's interjection sets herself against Creon.

517. nee confingere certe me sine: this, Thomann's punctuation of the Mea. reading barely makes sense and involves an anapaest in the fourth foot. However no plausible emendation has been proposed. nes: in view of "sit pretium Jason" (v. 513), this must refer to Medea and Creon.

518. sede defensor malis: Jason has no wish even to be a neutral "pretium". 520. Cf. v. 159.

523. caede cognata: Acastus was Jason's cousin. 2

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1 Vergil Aeneid Book XII (London, 1966)

2 Also another hint at the child-murder.
524. *innocent*: i.e. without clashing with Greek or Latin. Henry and Walker, SP, 62 (1967), 177 are mistaken in seeing an inconsistency with vv. 426-7; they ignore the repeated *locum* and *cum percas*'. If Jason flees with Medea, the presuppositions behind vv. 426-7 no longer apply.


526. *demores dabo*: for other instances of this use of *de* see Th. I. 14, 1.

529. *augurate*: the word is used literally of trees and of parts of the body (as early as Lucri. 28). It may then be a metaphor from agriculture or perhaps from the amphitheatre. It is also used of speech in Cis. Part. 15; Ag. 2, 138; Sen. Ep. 114, 17. See Th. I. 14, 1 *augurate* II 123 for further examples.

531-4. Again it is likely that Seneca has blended several models together. V. 531 recalls Nor. Od. 3, 5, 1: *saecl ... tenanterm ... Iovent* and in Ov. Met. 1, 230, *vindice flamma* is used of Jupiter's thunderbolt. It seems likely however that his main source was Ov. Met. 2, 309 ff.; note especially v. 311, *intext et dextra libratum fulvam*.

535-7: cf. v. 275.

537-8. *sana sedentari incipe/ et placida fere*: advice with a Stoic ring. The Stoic wise man possessed a tranquillity that stemmed from the perfect health of his soul. Since this tranquillity depended on the right attitude to external goods, Jason's offer of financial assistance represents a slip.

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2 Cf. Thuv. vv. 48-70; Ep. 75, 18.
from orthodoxy that Medea is quick to seize on (vv. 540-1).

539-9. Jason also offers financial assistance in E. Med. vv. 460-2; 610-6. Medea is quick to seize on (vv. 540-1). a clear expression of the Stoic contempt for externals (cf. Phaed. v. 483 ff.). Medea seems eager to show herself more familiar with Stoic doctrine than Jason. ¹ Medea also rejects Jason’s offer of aid in E. Med. vv. 616-8, though there is little verbal similarity. ² scelotque: see on v. 448.

542-3. In E. Med. vv. 340-3, the children are to be exiled with Medea. Clesyby (p. 54) complains that Seneca’s Medea seems to have changed her mind about taking the children with her, since vv. 282-3. However her earlier words were vague and probably written for their dramatic irony.


547. perusti: gains vividness from its earlier use of the Indians (v. 484).

548. levavemo: echoes “levare solamen” (v. 539).

549-50. sic nates erat?/ bene est, tenetur: the impact of these lines has been well prepared; Jason’s father-love, which, so eloquently expressed in vv. 546-9, spurs Medea’s decision, has been stressed earlier in the scene (cf. vv. 437-41) and ironically he assumes that Medea shares his attitude (v. 507). Thus Seneca has no need of Aegus whose childlessness suggests

¹ In fact of course, Medea’s next words (especially “lacrimas profunday”, v. 543) suggest an un-Stoic sentimentality, and for that matter, Jason’s response (especially vv. 547-9) goes far beyond the demands of Stoic pietas.
Medea's means of revenge in E. Med. v. 670. However in view of vv. 916-9, it is best to interpret the present passage as meaning that Medea has for the first time consciously determined to punish Jason through the children, but has not yet openly decided to kill them. *bene est tenetur*; also in Tro. v. 630. Cf. v. 1019 and Caster (p. 147). *tenetur, vulneri patuit locum*; a metaphor from gladiatorial combat. Cf. vv. 550; 565, 907; 993; and for comment p. 22 above.

550-1: note similar-sounding words, *"locus", "loqui"* at the line-ends.


552. *ultima exemplum*; cf. vv. 287; 348 for similar double-entendres.

557-9. Jason likewise forgives Medea in E. Med. v. 908 ff., but there is no real similarity. For Jason's advice, see on vv. 425-6; 537-8.

559. *quias*; the audience would no doubt recollect the definition of *quias* given by Medea in vv. 426-7.

560-7. Medea again threatens vengeance and goads herself to action. This section with its excited questions (vv. 561-2), its use of paronomasia (vv. 561-2; 562-3; 564, 566) and asyndeton, culminating in a sweeping polar expression (vv. 566-7) would again give great scope to the declarer. The passage may owe something to E. Med. vv. 401-9.

560. *vadis oblitus medi*; a scornful echo of *"melioris tibi/ memoria nostri sedent"*, vv. 555-6.

561. *oscidimus tibi*; occurs in same line-position in HQ v. 1392. Cf. also Tro. 714. For the repetition of *oscidor*, cf. *"aut omnes trahor./ trahes"*

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1 Cf. Anlicher, p. 106, note 45.
563. *vires et artes:* apt words for a witch and poisoner; cf. vv. 576; 843. 
563-4: a paradoxical sentiment again involving paranomaasia. *fructus:* for 
the use of this metaphor in similar contexts. See Th. i. i. s, *fructus* I n.
Note also *Ist.* vv. 422-3, *miserum maximus fructus abstulit nihil miserum,* 
though there the viewpoint is that of the sufferer not the criminal. Seneca 
stressed the importance of habit in the development of evil traits: e.g. 
"plurium potest consuetudo, quae si gravis est, alit vitium" (de Isr 2, 20, 
2). For the idea expressed in the present line, cf. vv. 48-50; 908-10. For 
the allied idea that crime inevitably engenders crime, cf. Fregd. v. 721;
Ag. vv. 115; 150; 154.

564-6. Medea points out the difficulty ("timorur"), then immediately 
answers the objection with a play on words ("qua nemo potent ... timere"). 
Perhaps "locus" (v. 564) reminds her of the "locus" in v. 550 and leads her 
to invoke again the image of the gladiator in "mas aggredere".

567. Cf. Plaut. *Tim.* v. 360; Cat. 76, 16 for other examples of "polar 
statements" where for rhetorical emphasis two opposite terms are used, only 
one of which is strictly applicable. *Ist.* vv. 1030-1 is superficially similar 
in form, but there both statements are true.

569. *varius casus:* cf. vv. 219-22; 296.

570-4: perhaps influenced by E. *Med.* vv. 949-55 where again the gifts were 
given by the sun. However in *Euripides*' *act* (vv. 706; 949), only two gifts are 
mentioned, a robe and a crown. 2

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1 For other uses of this common metaphor in the tragedies, see Canber, p. 112.

2 In *Apollod.* 1, 9, 23 only the robe is mentioned, in *Ist.* 8, 25, only the 
crown.
571. *dagenque regali: the fleece had been so termed in v. 130. pignus ...

genicis: Kingery (p. 291) observes that Phaethon demands "pignora" of the same god for the same purpose (Ov. Met. 2, 8).

576. *artibus: as Carter (p. 128) observes *artas stands by metonomy for *venenum.

578. *statuantur ara: on stage (cf. vv. 785; 808). 1 *flamma iam tectis 
ares: intentionally ambiguous. It may be understood as instructions to make a fire in the "penetralia" mentioned in v. 676, but it also forecasts the fire in Cleon's palace (cf. v. 879 ff.).

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1 An altar was a regular part of the scenery on the Roman stage (cf. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy*, pp. 83-4).
CHAPTER FOUR

Third Chorus (vv. 579-669)

This chorus has two main themes: the savagery of a jealous woman (vv. 579-94) and the revenge demanded by the gods for the first sea voyage (vv. 599-669). The link between these themes is the danger with which each threatens Jason (vv. 595-8; 668-9). The implication is that Medea is the gods’ instrument of vengeance on Jason – an idea already hinted at in v. 362. Metrically, the chorus consists of fourteen Sapphic stanzas of which the first seven (vv. 579-606) are of the usual type; the rest however (vv. 607-69) consist of eight eleven-syllable lines followed by an Adoneus. This change in stanza-structure heralds a new subdivision of the “angry-sea” theme, in which the fates of various Argonauts are related.

579-94: the violence of a deserted wife’s anger. A similar idea is briefly expressed in E. Med. vv. 263-6, but Seneca’s main source here is Ovid’s description of the deserted wife (A. A. 2, 373-82). Note particularly, Seneca’s echoes of vv. 377-9:

femina quam socii deprensae paelice lecti
ardet et in vultu pignora mentis habet
in ferrum flammasque ruit,

1 A theme stressed in the second chorus (vv. 301-64). There is a similar connection between the second and third choruses of HE.

2 See however on vv. 657-63.

3 Vv. 581-2 show the influence of Ovid’s vv. 377-8 and vv. 593-4 echo Ovid’s v. 379.
and the fact that in vv. 381-2, Ovid takes Medea as the typical example. As so often Seneca has rearranged the ideas of the original and has varied the details with borrowings from other sources. In the present lines the elemental power of the woman's wrath is stressed by comparisons to the wild forces of nature (cf. v. 411 ff.). Note particularly the fire imagery: "vis flammæ" (v. 579); "taedis" (v. 581); "ignes" (v. 601). See Herrmann (p. 488 f.) for other passages describing the power of love and jealousy.

579-82. Note the alliteration of v in v. 579, of q/e in v. 581 and of t throughout the stanza.

579. multa-vis: similar line-opening in Thy. v. 549. For the omission of est, here and in v. 604, see on v. 19.

580. For the emphatic positions of "tanta" and "quanta", cf. HE vv. 841; 848.

581. viduæ taedæ: probably modelled on Ov. Fast. 5, 487, "nec viduæ taedis eadem nec virginis apta/ tempora: quae mupsit, non diuturna fuit." This passage may have attracted Seneca's attention from the mention of "viduæ" and "virginis", and the similarity of the fate forecast for those who married on the Lemuria to that of Creusa. Note how Seneca has changed the grammatical relation of the borrowed words.

581-2. viduæ taedæ/ ardet: a play on the literal meanings of taedæ and ardere.

582. Probably "ardet" is used here in the metaphorical sense of love (cf. "ignis", v. 591) and Seneca intended a paradoxical antithesis on the lines of Catullus' "odi et amo" (85, 1), but the fact that metaphors from fire have been earlier used of anger, blurs the contrast.
584. Cattin (p. 87) cites N.s. 5, 16, to show that Auster is the Greek Notus. However in Ag. vv. 480-1, these are two different winds. For Auster as a rain-bearing wind, see the passages cited by Cattin (loc. cit.).

585. Hister: the Danube. Note that the chorus' point is proved in vv. 763-4. Again, similar-sounding words begin vv. 584-5 (see vv. 580-1).

586. pontes: Kingery's reference to boats (p. 291) is perverse.

587. For the point made here, see Strabo 4, 183. Note that this stanza like the last begins with "non ubi".


590. tabuit Haemus: fine use of synecdoche. For a similar, though less striking example, see v. 639.

591. caecus: the Stoics traditionally spoke of passion as blind. Cf. Cic. Fin. 1, 44; Inv. Rhet. 1, 2; and in the tragedies, Thy. v. 27; Phaed. v. 528; Ag. v. 118. ignis: used frequently of love (see L.s. ignis II a).

592. patiturve frenos: perhaps Seneca had in mind Ovid's fuller picture
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(Hor. 4, 22), "ut frenaque vix patitur de grege captus equus", though there, as in Phaed. (v. 574), the reins are those of love, not self-control. For other metaphors from the bridle, see p. 39 above.

593-4. For similar ideas and expressions, cf. Ov. A.A. 2, 379; Am. 1, 6, 39; Hor. 12, 155 (see on v. 27 above). Note also Hor. v. 593, "libet ire in enses", and de Ira 1, 1, 1, where anger is described as "in ipsa irruens tela".

595. veniam precamur: probably an echo of Hor. Od. 1, 2, 30, "venias precamur".

598. regna secunda: for this way of referring to the sea, cf. HP v. 599; Phaed. v. 904. The story of the lot-casting is given in N. II. 15, 164 ff.

599-602: Phaethon's fate is mentioned to support the argument; cf. the use of the Orpheus story in HP v. 569 ff.

599. aures: cf. the use of the word in v. 318. agitare surrus: also used of Phoebus' chariot in Ag. v. 617.

601-2. Probably an echo of Ovid on the same topic: "saevis compescuit ignibus ignes" (Met. 2, 313). ignes: in view of v. 591, the implication is that Jason may be destroyed by the very love he roused.

603-6. Kapnukjas (p. 129) points out the tendency of Seneca to place philosophical thoughts in the middle of his choruses and compares vv. 329-39, lines that correspond in subject-matter to the present passage.

603. constitit: see Carter (p. 114) for other instances of this metaphor in the tragedies, and see p. 39 above for other financial metaphors in Med.

605-6. nec rumpe ... foedera mundi: cf. vv. 335-6. Cf. also Ov. Met. 10, 353; Hor. Od. 1, 3, 21 ff.

607-69: the fate of the Argonauts. Note that the chorus by implication
refutes Medea's claim to have saved the heroes for Greece. (v. 225 ff.).
Cf. especially v. 226 f. and v. 625 ff.; v. 231 and v. 634. Seneca has
not followed any extant passage as an overall model here.

607-15. Note the symmetry of structure: "quisquis" in both vv. 607 and 610
is followed by two verbs each in the perfect tense.

607. audacis: cf. v. 301 etc.

608. nobiles remos: for this type of metonymy, see p. 42 above. The way
for this rather bold expression is paved by "regumque feream ... remos"
(vv. 366-7).

609. apostavit: for a similar use, see Ov. Fast. 4, 753.

610. scopulos vagantes: originally distinct from the Symplegades (vv. 341,
456), as Pago (on E. Med. v. 2) shows. Seneca, like many other writers, seems
to regard them as the same.

612. barbara ... ora: Colchis. Note the framing technique in this line.

613. auri: i.e. the golden fleece. Note that the line contains three
words with a pejorative sense: "raptor", "externi", "auri" (see on v. 361).
The chorus's disapproval is emphasized by the alliteration of g.

614. Note the stress on η in this line.

615. iura: a common metaphor. For other examples in the tragedies, see
Canter (p. 117). The present phrase is rather similar to "fosdera mundi"
(vv. 335; 606).

616-24: the fate of Tiphys.

616. provocatum: a common enough metaphor (see LS.s. provoco IIIA), it
occurs also in HO v. 155. In the present passage however the personification
of "mare" makes the expression more vigorous.

617. *domitor profundit*: rather sarcastic here. Cf. v. 346, where "audax" is used similarly. Note that Neptune is termed "dominus profundit" in v. 597, also at the line-end. There seems a deliberate contrast between the real ruler ("dominus") and the rash usurper ("domitor"). Cf. vv. 2, 4 for a similar contrast.

618. *indoeto ... magistro*: either Ascaeus (according to A.R. 2, 894; Apollod. 1, 126; Hyg. E. 14) or Erginus (according to Val. Fl. 5, 65). *indoeto*: in contrast to Tiphys who had been taught ("docuisti", v. 3) by Athene.


619-20. *paternis/ regnis*: the scholiast on A.R. 1, 105 declares that Tiphys came from Siphae in Boeotia. See however v. 622.

622. *Aulis*: the repeated personifications in this stanza (cf. v. 616, and "carinas ... querentes", vv. 623-4) make human endeavour seem futile and stresses the inevitability of the fate of the Argonauts. *amissi ... regis*: though Tiphys came from Siphae (see on vv. 619-20) Aulis too was in Boeotia, and Silver Age poets care little for strict geographical accuracy (cf. v. 713).

623. *restitat*: revenge? Or fear that the Greeks might share Tiphys' fate? At any rate, Seneca conjures up the image of another voyage that brought ruin to many of its leaders - the Trojan expedition (cf. Verg. Aen. 11, 254 ff.).


625-33: the fate of Orpheus. Orpheus' powers of song (vv. 625-9) are a favourite theme in the tragedies: cf. vv. 228-9; 358-60; HP vv. 572-5; HO v. 1031 ff. The present passage shows the influence of Hor. Od. 1, 12, 7-12:
unde vocalem temere insecutae

Orphea silvae,
atre materna rapidos morantem
fluminum lapsus celeresque ventos,
blandum et auritas fidibus canoris
ducere quercus.

Note how Seneca has ingeniously combined Horace's "arre materna" and "vocalem", in "vocali genitus Camena". He has again varied the picture with other details: "comitante silva" echoes Hor. Od. 3, 11, 14; the mention of birds is perhaps an Ovidian touch (cf. Nat. 10, 144; 11, 44), though this point is mentioned as early as Simonides (Frg. 27, Diehl).

625. Camena: Calliope (cf. HO v. 1034).

626. restitit torrens: a power first attributed to Orpheus in A.R. 1, 26 ff.

630-1. Orpheus was torn apart by Thracian women who were angered at his neglect of them; cf. Verg. Geor. 4, 520-7; Ov. Nat. 11, 1-60. The present lines seem a blend of two lines by Ovid: "vacosque iacent dispersa per agros" (Nat. 11, 35) and "membra iacent diversa locis; caput, Hecube, lyranque / excipis" (Nat. 11, 50-1).

631. Orpheus' head was supposed to have been carried down sea to Lesbos (Ov. Nat. 11, 55).


633. non reditusurus: on the previous occasion, he had returned to the Upper World. See v. 476 for a similar use of the future participle.

634-42: Hercules, after killing three other Argonauts, perished himself.

634. Alcides: Hercules' grandfather was Alcaeus. Aquilonem natos: Zetes
and Calais (cf. v. 231). Hercules killed them on Tenos because they had wanted to leave Hercules behind when he was searching for Hylas (see vv. 646-51).  

635-6. Neptunus genitus: Periolymenus. Seneca here probably has in mind Ov. Met. 12, 556-8, though he has compressed Ovid's lines:

mira Periolymeni nora est cui posse figuras
sumere, quas vellet, marseusque reponere somptas
Neptunus dederat.

636: a twelve-syllable line with resolution in the arsis of the second foot. Cf. Tro. vv. 836, 1051. Such a resolution is unparallelled in the sapphics of the Lesbian writers and Horace.

637. terrae pelasique pagus: a reference to the labours of Hercules. For the phrase, cf. HF vv. 250; 882 ff.; HQ v. 794; Ov. Her. 9, 5. In the tragedies Hercules is pictured as the terror of tyrants and monsters (cf. HF v. 30 ff.), and the benefactor of mankind. This Stoic picture of Hercules is of course also present in Seneca's prose work. Note especially Ben. 1, 13, 3: "quid vinceret malorum hostis bonorum vindex terrarum marisque pacator". Note alliteration of p in the present line.

638. A reference to the theft of Cerberus. natafacta: used in a similar context in Tro. v. 724, HF v. 55.

639-42: the theme of Seneca's HQ. When the centaur Nessus tried to abduct Deianira, Hercules' wife, the hero shot him with an arrow tinged with hydra poison. The dying centaur gave Deianira some of his poisoned blood, claiming it was a love philtre (see HQ v. 500 ff.). Later Deianira gave Hercules

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A.R. 1, 1302 ff.
a robe smeared with this. When Hercules realised that he was suffering a
lingering death, he raised a funeral pyre on Mt. Ceta (between Thessaly and
Aetolia) and burnt himself alive – a point emphasized here by the collocation,
"vivus ardenti".

640. \textit{sevias... flamnia}: the word-order suggests the flames enveloping
Hercules' body.

641. \textit{gemini... crucris}: the mingled blood of Nessus and the hydra.

642. \textit{nusere nuptae}: these words, placed in an emphatic position again suggest
the danger Jason is in from Medea.

643-4. \textit{strevit}: as in v. 634. \textit{Ancaeus}: there were two Argonauts of this
name and each was killed by a boar. Thus in one clause, Seneca kills off
Ancaeus, the Arcadian (a victim of the Calydonian boar) and Ancaeus of Samos,
who, according to A.R. 2, 665, replaced Tiphys as Argo's steersman.¹ In
the present lines, Seneca may have had in mind Ov. \textit{Met.} 8, 318 ff., where
the hunt for the Calydonian boar and the death of Ancaeus are recounted.
Ovid terms the beast \textit{violentus} (v. 338) and \textit{maestiger} (v. 376) and further,
after the hunt, describes the death of Meleager (v. 445 ff.).

644. \textit{Meleager}: killed the Calydonian boar (Ov. \textit{Met.} 8, 414 ff.), but then
killed his uncles. His mother, Althaia, in revenge for the murder of her
brothers, burnt the stick on which Meleager's life depended (Ov. \textit{Met.} 8,
451 ff.). Note alliteration of \textit{a} in vv. 644-6.

646-9. Thomsen's punctuation – a stop after "scutii" and a question mark
after "undas" – is less satisfactory than the traditional stop after "undas".

¹ See schol. on A.R. 1, 188 for the remarkable story of his death.
646. *meruere*: best taken in the sense of "commit", a rare use but cf. Ep. 7, 5 and Vell. 2, 130. This interpretation avoids the confusion of thought that Kingery (p. 294) sees.

648. *puer*: Hylas, a handsome youth, loved by Hercules. Near Cius he was drawn into a pool by a Naiad who had fallen in love with him (A.R. 1, 1207 ff.). The story was a favourite of painters and poets: "sui non dictus Hylas puer?" (Verg. Geor. 3, 6). In vv. 647-9, Seneca has in mind Ov. A.A. 2, 110, "Naiadumque tener crimum raptus Hylas." Note how Seneca has given Ovid's "crimum" a new twist. *inreptus*: Hercules searched for him far and wide (cf. A.R. 1, 1260 ff.; Theoc. 13, 55 f.).

649. *tutas inter undas*: the word order and the use of "undas" emphasize the irony of Hylas' death. Cf. the treatment of Pellas' fate (v. 667). Note the ingenious sound-effects in vv. 648-9: "puer in -" occurs in the same line position; we have the play on "inreptus/ raptus"; "tutas puer" contains the same sounds as "raptus".

650. *ite nunc*: see p. 85 above. *perarate*: the metaphorical use of this word with reference to seafaring is first found here. However *araro* is found earlier in this sense (e.g. Verg. Aen. 2, 780; Ov. Aen. 2, 10, 33; Trist. 1, 2, 76).

651. *fonte*: Miller (1, 285), Canter (p. 124) and Hadad (p. 29) all understand the word in the sense of "sea-water". There is no real parallel for this usage and their interpretation spoils the *sententia*. Kingery (p. 295) is surely right to take it as a reference to the spring where Hylas drowned. This accords better with the sarcasm of v. 650.

652-3. Seneca seems to have confused the deaths of Idmon and Hopsus.
Idmon was killed by a boar amongst the Mariandyni (A.R. 2, 815 ff.; Apollod. 1, 126), Nopsus was killed by a snake in Libya (A.R. 4, 1518 ff.). *bene fata nosset*; cf. A.R. 1, 443; 2, 816. For the phrase, cf. Phoen. v. 83.

654: a fine antithesis.

655. *condidit*: echoes "condidit" at the beginning of v. 653. *Nopsus ... Thebes*: again Seneca seems to have erred, confusing the Argonaut Nopsus from Titaron with the prophet of the same name from Thebes.


657-63: in these lines the fates that Nopsus prophesied for various Argonauts or their relatives are listed. This passage presents some severe difficulties. First, the stanza (vv. 651-606) contains ten lines instead of the nine in all the other stanzas in vv. 607-69. Second, the first part of v. 660a is missing. Third, in v. 661, Oileus is given the mode of death of his son Ajax. Thomann seeks to lessen the difficulties by placing v. 661 (in which he reads "Oilei") before v. 660a and supposing the omission of two lines (659a and 662a), but these rearrangements represent no real improvement on the traditional order. Perhaps however Leo is right to expunge v. 657 to preserve the symmetry of the stanza structure.


658-9. Nauplius, an Argonaut (A.R. 1, 134-8) incensed by the murder of his son Palamedes at the hands of the Greek leaders (cf. Verg. *Aen.* 2, 82 ff.),
lured the fleet returning from Troy on to the promontory Caphresus, at the
south of Euboea (see Ag. v. 567 ff.). cadet in profundum: this is the
clearest account of his death, but cf. Apollod. 2, 23, igne fallaci: cf.
"perfida ... face" (Ag. v. 570).
660a. Leo supplies occidet proles to complete the line. Probably vv. 660a,
b refer to Palamedes, since they occur in the same stanzas as the lines deal-
ing with Nauplius, though they would apply equally to Oileus (Ajax) in v. 661.
patrocrime: i.e. of being an Argonaut (cf. v. 647). Note the alliter-
ation of p.

661. Oileus was an Argonaut (A.R. 1, 74), but it was his son Ajax who
died "fulmine et ponto". In Ag. v. 535 ff., Seneca describes how Ajax was
first struck by Pallas' lightning, then again knocked into the sea and
drowned by a rock dislodged by Neptune. Note v. 556, "terraque et igne
victus et pelago iacet". Seneca must then be using the father's name, with
reference to the son. The fact that this Ajax was regularly called Ajax
Oilei or Ajax Oileus to distinguish him from Ajax, son of Telamon, makes
the present line more understandable. Comprehension is also assisted by
the idea in vv. 660a, b that a son is punished for a father's crime. Here
then the use of Oileus for Ajax emphasizes that it is the former's crime
that is being punished.

662-3. Admetus, King of Pherae, who also had been an Argonaut (A.R. 1, 49),
was saved from death by his wife Alcestis, who was allowed to die in his
stead. Alcestis' devotion presents a striking contrast to Medea. These
lines may be influenced by Ov. A.A. 3, 19-20, "fata Phereetiadae coniux
Pagassae redemit/ proque virost uxor funere lata viri". Note the financial
imagery in "redimens", "impended".

664-7: the fate of Pelias. See on v. 133 above. The transition to Pelias is neat, since Alcestis was his daughter.

666-7. Note the piling-up of synonyms to accentuate Pelias' suffering.

667. angustas ... undas: as Kingery (p. 296) observes, an ironic contrast to the mighty voyage he ordered. vagus: adds to the irony by conjuring up the image of the wandering Argonauts, but also refers to his chopped-up limbs (cf. v. 47 for a similar use of the word).

668-9: appeal to the gods to save Jason ("iussus"). iam satis: this line-opening occurs in Hor. Od. 1, 2, 1. For other likely echoes of this ode, cf. vv. 587; 595.

669. iussus: picks up "iussit" (v. 664). For the idea cf. Tro. vv. 670-1, "quid iussa cessas aeger? ad auctorem redit/ sceleris coacti culpa".

Act Four (vv. 670-848)

This act is entirely devoted to a description of Medea's magic rites, whose purpose is to poison the gifts for Creusa.

There was a long tradition of descriptions of magic in ancient literature, 1 the earliest examples occurring in the Odyssey (e.g. Circe

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1 See S. Eitrem, "La Magie comme Motif Littéraire chez les Grecs et les Romains", 80, 2 (1941), 39-63.
in Book 10). Magic plays a lesser role in extant classical Greek literature, though the *Rhizotomoi* of Sophocles and certain mines of Sophron were devoted to this theme. In the Hellenistic period, treatment of magic becomes common: Menander's *Thetale* does not survive, but see A.R. 3, 1026 ff.; 1201 ff.; 4, 1665 ff.; Theoc., 2. The Augustans were also intrigued by magic. Notable passages are Verg. *Aen.* 4, 478 ff.; *Hor.* *Epod.* 5; 17; *Sat.* 1, 8; Tib. 1, 2, 41 ff.; Prop. 4, 5, 5-13; Ov. *Met.* 7, 179-293; *Hor.* 6, 83 ff.

It is difficult to determine the extent to which Seneca has made use of these predecessors since many of the points he mentions are commonplaces of this theme. However, he probably had Ov. *Met.* 7, 179-293 in mind (see on vv. 717-23 below), a passage that describes Medea's rejuvenation of Aeson.

Descriptions of magic were congenial to the rhetorical poets of the Silver Age with their straining after the bizarre and horrific. ¹ Elsewhere in Seneca's tragedies we have a necromancy scene in *Oed.* vv. 530-658 and a witch in *Herc.* vv. 452 ff.² More powerful is Lucan's gruesome description of

1 As Kirwan observes (pp. 70, 76) the rhetorical schools sometimes used magic ceremonies as a theme.

2 Note that in the prose works, we have a rather contemptuous reference to magic in *Ep.* 9, 6: "Hexaton ait, Ego tibi monstrabo amatorum sine medicamento, sine herba, sine ullius veneficae carmine: si vis amari, amai!"
Erichtho and the witches of Thessaly (6, 434 ff.).¹ Petronius (134-5) seems to parody some of the more extravagant claims of witches, and literary pictures of magic.

The extent to which literary descriptions of magic and Seneca’s in particular reflect popular beliefs and practices is not easy to determine. However many of the feats mentioned in literary passages are paralleled in the magic papyri.² Certainly in Seneca’s day, magic practices, though no doubt despised by intellectuals (cf. Hor. Ep. 2, 2, 206 ff. “sonnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas, / nocturnos leures portentaque Thessala rides?”), were widespread at Rome.³

Medea was the most famous witch of antiquity, both in literature and popular fancy.⁴ Seneca no doubt felt he must do justice to her reputation and this act would have been greatly to the taste of his contemporaries. His procedure is in interesting contrast to that of Euripides who in his Medea describes the effects of the magic rather than the magic itself; there can be no doubt whose version is more dramatic and artistic. Indeed for the modern reader, this act is perhaps the least acceptable part of Seneca’s play. After the wearisome details of Medea’s rites, one longs

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² These papyri are conveniently assembled in C. Freyendanz, Papyri Graecae Magicæ (Leipzig, 1928).

³ Note that Claudius renewed the legislation of Tiberius against sorcerers (Tac Ann. 12, 52) and that, under Nero, a girl called Servilia was accused of selling part of her dowry in the hope of saving the life of her father by magic (ibid. 16, 21).

⁴ See on vv. 670-739.
for the consent of an Encolpius (Petr. 135): "Inhorruit ego tam fabulosa pollucitationse centerritus, amnque inspicere diligentissimae coepi."

vv. 670-739: the Nurse describes Medea’s preparations of the herbs and snake-poisons, gathered from all over the world, that she will use in her magic rites. Medea is termed παμφίρμικος by Pindar (P. 4, 233) and her box of magic simples is often mentioned (e.g. A. R. 3, 802; 4, 25). Medea became known as the arch-poisoner, the pattern for other witches: e.g. 
190 vv. 463-4; Hor. Epod. 5, 61; Ov. A. A. 2, 101; Claud. in Satir. 1, 153. See also on vv. 705-30; 720. A female poisoner would be a topical enough theme in Nero’s Rome. Note particularly the career of Locusta who was alleged to have worked the deaths of Claudius and Britannicus (Tac. Ann. 12, 66; 13, 15).


671. insana ... accendit: Kingery (p. 296) compares Hor. Od. 1, 27, 6: "insana quam sic discrepant" and the common use of minus in the same way.

672. accendit: for metaphors from fire, see on v. 390. The Nurse seems to be recalling that earlier rage of her mistress ("cinque praeferitan") that she described in v. 382 ff.

673-5. The Nurse’s fear and Medea’s frenzy are conveyed by the chiasma and jingle ("furentes ... trahentes") in vv. 673-4, by the jerky break in v. 674 and by the conduplicatio of "caius" (v. 674) and the alliteration of in (vv. 674-5).

673-4. aggressae decus/caelum trahentes: cf. vv. 271, 424 above. Not merely an invocation of the gods as Kingery (p. 296) suggests, but the drawing down of the heavenly bodies, especially the moon. This love charm is first mentioned in Ar. Nup. v. 749 and is frequently referred to by later Greek
and Roman writers. Note particularly Tib. 1, 2, 43, where again a witness is speaking: "hanc aeg de caelo secundas sidera vidi". For the use of *nunc* in this context cf. *Phaed.* vv. 420, 791 and *Ov. Met.* 7, 207. See also note on v. 791 below. There is something of an inconsistency here, as in other Roman descriptions of the moon charm, in that the moon is on the one hand a passive victim of sorcery (cf. Luc. 6, 500 ff.; Farnell, *Cults* 2, 513) and on the other hand is identified with Hecate (cf. v. 751) the great patron and helper of witches.

675. *attentio gradu*: see p.

676. *penetrale fuscum*: the same as the "arne" of v. 578 and the "tutico sacrum", v. 680.

677. *open affundit*: "fundit open" occurs in a magical context in v. 3 of the poem in *Petr.* 134, though there the phrase is used of the earth. For the present metaphor, see I. 8. *affundet* 182c and notes on vv. 113; 554.

678. *atiam ipem*: typical Sicanian point. For a rather similar use of "ipse", see v. 117.

680. *laeva*: the left hand was generally used in magic rites. Compressane: little to choose between this, the reading of ή, and A's *complicane*.

681-3. *Libyae ... Taurus*: places and climates chosen to indicate the extent of Medea's power. Cf. v. 373. Libya is frequently referred to as abounding

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1 E.g. *Men. Thalatta* (see *Flin. H.H.* 30, 7); *A.R.* 3, 535; *Verg. Aen.* 8, 69; *Tib.* 1, 8, 21; *Hor. Buc.* 5, 45-6; 17, 77-3; *Prop.* 4, 5, 14; *Ov. Met.* 7, 207; *Hor.* 6, 86-6; *Aen.* 2, 33; *Petr.* 134, vv. 8-9; *Ho* vv. 526-7. See also Freisenhans, 4, 1326.

in serpents; it was alleged that blood had dropped there from the Gorgon's head. Cf. Ov. Met. 4, 617 ff.

682-3. perpetua nive/Taurus: but in Phaed. vv. 382-3 Seneca writes, "qualiter Tauri inuis/ tepido madesuant imbre perussaes nives." Aretoc: i.e. northern, like Aretos, the Bears, (cf. v. 405). Note that "frigido Aretoc rigens" is used of Bootes in Oeh. v. 234.

684-704. the snakes called by Medea. Snake- charming is frequently mentioned in lists of magic feats and snake charmers (especially from the Faylli and Marsi) were familiar in the streets of Rome (cf. Mart. 1, 41, 7). But of course Medea's feats are more grandiose than any such frons vulgaris (cf. v. 693).

684. magicis cantibus: i.e. her incantations. Cf. "carmine" (v. 688), "cantus mens" (v. 699), "cantibus ... meis" (v. 704), "verba" (v. 737). Such incantations were employed during the performance of most magic rites and often imitated the sound of a dog (cf. Petr. 63) or various other creatures (Luc. 6, 685-94).

685. squamifera ... turba: a phase with a Lucretian ring (cf. Lucr. 1, 162: "squamigerum genus", of fish). squamifera: only here in the tragedies, though also used of snakes in Luc. 9, 709. turba: also of snakes in Luc. 9, 608.

686. cf. "hic dira serpens" at beginning of v. 1813 in HO.

687. trifidem: cf. Sil. 6, 222 "trifidos motus linguae". Actually as Austin

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1 Note particularly Luc. 9, 607 ff. and see v. 653 above. Actually however only one type of snake (serastes) is common in Libya. See M.P.O. Norford, "The Purpose of Lucan's Ninth Book", Lat. 26 (1967), 127.

2 E.g. Verg. Gal. 8, 71; Asm. 7, 750; Ov. Am. 2, 1, 25; Met. 7, 203; Manil. 5, 390; Flin. M.H. 7, 14; 28, 19; 28, 30; Luc. 9, 833; 922.
observes (p. 188) in a note on "trisulcis" (Verg. Aen. 2, 475), the snake's
tongue is forked, not divided into three. However, Pliny (N.H. 11, 171) and
Silver Age poets (see Austin's note for further examples) follow Vergil on
this point. *exertat*: only here in the tragedies.

688. *mortifera*: emphatically placed. Note how the malignancy of the poisons
is stressed by the repeated use of the word in the Nurse's description.

689. *tumidum*: this and cognate words are frequently used of snakes (e.g.


690-704: an example of *prseponoposis*, a favourite device of the orators
(cf. Quint. 6, 25).

690-1. The *sententia* is given point by the play on "telum" and "tellus"
and the double-meaning of "isa" ("despest", "base").

692. *iam tempus est*: perhaps a deliberate echo of the chorus' "iam tempus
erat" (v. 111).

694-5. *ille... anguis*: the constellation Draco which lies in the northern
sky between the two Bears. According to the usual version (RI 5, 2, 1648),
this was the dragon killed by Hercules in the garden of the Hesperides. See
however note on "Python" v. 700. Seneca describes the constellation in
similar terms in Thy. vv. 369-72. In both passages he seems influenced by
Verg. Geor. 1, 244-5 and perhaps by Cic. N.D. 2, 106, both of which in turn
stem from Arat. v. 45 ff. *more torrentis*: a point made in Thy. v. 870; Verg.

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1 Used here of snakes, the word is repeated in vv. 717, 731 of plants.
696-7. an example of regressio (Quint. 9, 335). cf. HF vv. 905-6.
697. note the effective use of asyndeton and chiasmus.
698. Ophiuchus: the "serpent-holder", a constellation in the northern hemisphere that was viewed as a man grappling with a snake. This snake is not the Draco (see on vv. 694-5), a point Kíngéry ignores.¹ However, confusion is natural for there were several snake-constellations. Servius (in Verg. Geor. 1, 205) declares. "Tres sunt angues in caelo: unus qui in septentrione est, alter Ophiuchi, tertius australis."² Even this is an understatement (see 95 18, 1, 650-4). Ophiuchus is thus described in Cic. N.D. 2, 109 (translation of Arat. 74 f.): "Aurítenensis/ quem claro perhibent Ophiuchum nomine Graii/ hic pressu duplici palmarum continst anguem".
700. Python: there were several versions of the story how Apollo killed this monster at Delphi. The story Seneca has in mind seems to be that outlined by Klearchos of Soloi (46, 2, 318f) in which Leto came to Delphi, carrying the twins Apollo and Artemis. The Python attacked her but was killed by the infant Apollo. It should be noted that according to some,³ Python became the constellation Draco and it is possible that Seneca intends

¹ See his confusing reference to "the Dragon" in his note on v. 698 (p. 297).
² This southern constellation is Hydra. See on v. 701.
³ See Schol. on Arat. v. 45.
a further astronomical reference here.

701-2: the Lernean Hydra whose slaying was the second of Hercules’ labours. 

caede se reparans sua: whenever one of its nine heads were cut off, two 
sprung up in its place. Mention of this point is made in many of the re-
ferences to the Hydra in the tragedies. omnis ... serpens: the individual 
heads. The Hydra is another heavenly snake; it was a large constellation 
of the southern sky (see Cic. N.R. 2, 114).

703-4. tu quoque: the dragon that guarded the fleece. See on v. 473. 

Appropriate that Medea should end with a proven example of her powers. These 
lines seem to echo Ov. Met. 7, 149 "pervigiles superest herbis aspire draconem".


Ov. Met. 7, 224; Val. Fl. 7, 323 ff. See also above on vv. 670-739.

705. evocavit: a military metaphor (cf. L.S. avo co IB 2 and p. 39 above 
for other military metaphors). omne serpentus genus: cf. Oed. v. 587,

"omne viperum genus", in the same line position and also in a passage where 
military metaphors are used of snakes conjured by magic.

707-17: note the repeated use of relatives in emphatic positions.

708. hic per perpetua: cf. v. 682.

rubent". According to A.R. 3, 85 ff., the salve given to Jason before he 
tamed the bulls, came from a plant which grew from the blood of Prometheus 
on Caucasus. sparsus cruore: a favourite, Semean phrase, cf. HP. v. 445, 

Ag. v. 448; NO. v. 818.

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1 Cf. HP vv. 241, 761; Ag. v. 835; NO vv. 258, 1534.
710-11. it seems perverse of Thomann not to accept Gronov's transposition here.

710-3. perhaps the choice of names was influenced by Cat. 11, 4-5.

711. divites Arabas: cf. Phaedr. v. 67; HQ v. 793. Arabia was famous for its spices (Oed. v. 117) and perfume (HQ v. 793). quis: Leo (1, 214) points out that quis for quibus is very rare in poetry. Vergil and Horace only employ the former when quibus metrically impossible. Other cases in the tragedies where Seneca preferred quis when he might have written quibus are Phaed. v. 43; Oed. v. 680; Ag. v. 197.

710. Parthi: this reference is an anachronism. Much more commonly the Parthians are termed Medi (e.g. Nor. Od. 1, 2, 51; 3, 5, 9) or Persae (e.g. Nor. Od. 1, 2, 22; 3, 5, 4), leves: as in Verg. Geor. 4, 314. The light-armed Parthian archers used to fire over their shoulders as they retreated. 1 Perhaps this adjective would also carry a suggestion of treachery. Cf. Oed. vv. 118-9, "sagittis/ terga fallaces metuenda Parthi".

712. Cf. HQ v. 1251 "quis te sub axe frigido".

713. The feminine "Suebæ" is an effective touch and the picture is a colourful one, but Seneca's geography is sadly astray (but see on v. 720); the Suebi were a German tribe, while the Hyrcani lived on the south shore of the Caspian Sea.

714. quodcumque tellus..., creat: cf. HQ v. 28, "quodcumque tellus genuit" nidifico: found only here in surviving authors. Together with "decus nemorum" it conveys a striking picture of spring.

715. An effective echo of Verg. Geor. 2, 404 "frigidus et silvis Aquilo decussit honorem." Note Seneca's ingenious changes; "discussit" for "decussit",

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1 Their most notable success was the defeat of Crassus at Carrhae in 53 B.C.
"rigida" for "frigidus", and the different grammatical relations between "decus" and "nemorum" and "honorem" and "silvis". Cf. also Hor. Epist. 11, 5-6. "December ... silvis honorem decuit". Servius (ad. loc.) declares that Vergil has borrowed his line from Varro (cf. Atax).

715-6. What plants could grow in such weather? Note the alliteration of d. R. 2 in immediate succession.

716. nivali ... gelu: see on v. 123. constrinxit: this metaphor is also used of cold in Apot. v. 517; Curt. 7, 3, 11; Col. 1, 6, 18. Calp. Cal. 5, 109. Note the effective word order with "nivali ... gelu" embracing "suntae constrinxit".

717-22. In composing these lines and vv. 729-30, Seneca seems to have had two passages from Ov. Met. 7 in mind; vv. 225-7 and 264-5. Both of these are extracts from passages describing Medea's herb gathering. The latter merits quotation here: "illo Haemonia radices valle resectas seminaque florescunt at sucum incoquit acres". Cf. "flore" v. 717; "sucus", v. 717; "radicibus" v. 718; "Haemonius" v. 720. See also on vv. 729-30.

718. Again skilful word-order, suggesting the poison contained in the roots.

720. Haemonius ... Athos: actually Athos was in Macedonia not Thessaly. This is a poetic affectation rather than an error, for in HO vv. 1383-4, we have "qui Thracios flactus Athos/ frangit". Probably Ovid's "Haemonia ... vallis" Met. 7.264) influenced Seneca here. Thessaly was famous for its magic plants1 (cf. HO vv. 464-5, Luc 6, 440 ff.), according to some2

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1 And indeed famous for magic in general. See on vv. 790-1.

2 E.g. Schol. on Ar. Nux. v. 749. Lucan however says the magic plants were indigenous to Thessaly (6, 441-2).
because Medea dropped box of herbs there. *pastes*! affect for cause. The word is also used of poisonous objects in O. d. v. 153 where it refers to snakes. Cf. also v. 355 above where it is used of the Sirens.

721. Note that Pindus is mentioned in Ov. Met. 7, 225.

722. *faiae*: the favoured method of cutting magic herbs. Cf. Theoc. 2, 30; Ov. Fast 2, 577; Met. 7, 227; Met. 6, 84; Verg. Aen. 4, 513. See also on "ferrum" (v. 728). *cunque*: frequently used in poetry of foliage from Cat. (4, 12) on. See further examples in Canter (p. 106) and Is. s. *cunque* 2.

723-7: as Kissing observes (p. 298), these rivers represent roughly the points of the compass. Cf. vv. 373, 661. Note how the use of chiasmus in vv. 723-5 lends clarity and emphasis.

723. *Tigris*: in its early course, this river is swift-flowing, (cf. "violentus unde" I. F. v. 1324) but slows as it travels over the plain. *altum gurgitem*; cf. NO v. 501 "huncus altum gurgitem ... ferens". *pressens*: cf. "compressit", v. 764.

725. *Hydaspes*: a tributary of the Indus, now the Jhelum. The river was supposed to be rich in diamonds; cf. NO v. 623 "dives ... Hydaspes".

726. *Baetis*: a river in Southern Spain, now the Guadalquivir. *posen ... dedit*: the Provincia Baetica was named after it. Corduba, Seneca's birthplace, lay in this province.

727. *Hesperia*: "western" after Hesperus. To Vergil's Trojans the word meant Italy. The Romans often used it of Spain (e.g. Hor. Od. 1, 36, 4). Horace (Epod. 5, 22) terms Spain "venenorum ferax". *vado*: often of rivers, cf. v. 762; Canter p. 124.

728-30: the plants were gathered at different times and in different ways.

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1 But this line with the *cunque* metaphor, the use of "teneam" (cf. v. 66 above) and the strange "cruenta" foreshadows the child-murder.
728. *Ferrum:* this is strange. Iron, the later discovery, was normally taboo in magic rites, bronze being used instead. Presumably "*ferrum*" is used here in a general way for *falx,* without stress on the actual metal.


731 ff.: Medea mixes her ingredients and utters an incantation. Cf. *Macbeth*.

731-2: cf. Horace's views on garlic (*Fast.* 3, 6 ff.) a passage in which he has Medea's career in mind.

732-4: Miss Lowe's comments on the use of animal products: "The more disgusting a thing was the more likely it was to be used and the greater the virtues ascribed to it by the magicians." Seneca is comparatively restrained. Cf. Luc. 6, 533-61, 667-84. *Note* how Polyanthes adds vivacity to these lines.


733. Owls are considered uncanny and evil portents by most peoples. Cf. e.g. "It was the owl that shrieked, / the fatal bellman, which gives the sternest goodnight" (*Macbeth* 2, 2, 3-4). *Iunonis:* the eagle owl. Pliny ("Nat.* 10, 34) has an accurate and impressive description: *"subo funebris et maxime abominatus publicis præcipue suspicios deserta inculte nec tactus desolata sed dira etiam et inaccessae nootis monstrum nec cantu aliquo vocalis"

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sed gemitu." The poets (especially Ovid) frequently introduce it as an ill
omen.¹ strige: the screech or barn owl. Also mentioned as an ingredient
in a magic mixture in Ov. Met. 7, 268; Prop. 3, 6, 28; Hor. Epod. 5, 20. This
owl has a particularly weird appearance, for it has ghostly white underparts,
a heart-shaped face, a wavering moth-like flight and the most blood-curdling
voice. Indeed in ancient times these birds were thought of as witches that
sucked the blood of young children (cf. Ov. Fast. 6, 131 ff.; Prop. 4, 5, 17),
and strige in popular language became the word for a witch (cf. Petr. 134 and
note the modern Italian, straga). According to HF vv. 687-8, both owls
haunt the underworld.

734. viscerae: see on v. 40. haece scelerum artifex: also uttered by
Hippolytus (Phaed. v. 559) in denouncing women;² he cites Medea (vv. 563-6)
to prove his point. Cf. also Tro. v. 750 and Ag. v. 983. Cf. Green's de-
nunciation of Medea (v. 266 above).

735-6. "Vis ignium" is certainly a result of the potions, but it is also
an ingredient (cf. v. 818 ff.), albeit a hidden one. For frost as a magic
ingredient, see Ov. Met. 7, 268, a passage Seneca probably had in mind. Canter-
(p. 79) rightly criticise the tautology in this bombastic line.

et non imoxia verba" and Ov. Met. 7, 248.

739. mundus ..., tremit: for a similar reaction to magic incantation, cf.
Ov. Met. 7, 205; 14, 407; Verg. Aen. 4, 490-1; Tib. 1, 2, 45.

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¹ E.g. Ov. Met. 5, 543; 550; 6, 432; 10, 453; Am. 1, 12, 19; Verg. Aen. 4, 462;
10, 453; Luc. 5, 396; 6, 689.

² Though in Phaed. v. 559, "haec" is feminine singular.
740-848. Medea enters and invokes the powers of the underworld and above all Hecate, identified with the Moon, to aid her magic. Satisfied that her prayers are answered, she sends her sons to Creusa bearing the deadly gifts. P.W. Harsh 1 comments on the metrical variation in this passage. "She enters with excited trochaics [vv. 740-51], lists her magical accomplishments in staid iambics (well suited to the realm of facts) [vv. 752-70], shifts to lyric iambics in making her offerings [vv. 771-86] and then to anapaests for her "prayers" [vv. 787-842]." Her magic rites over, she returns to the usual iambics in vv. 843-8.


741. Chaos caecum: as in Oed. v. 572. Theogories agree in making Chaos the origin of all things (cf. Hes. Th. v. 116; Ov. Met. 1,4) and is thus addressed in the papyri (e.g. Preisendanz 1, 120). caecum ... opacum ... umbrosi: another unsubtle attempt to emphasize a point by piling up adjectives. Note also polysyndeton in vv. 740-1.

742. Tartari: the area of the underworld in which evildoers dwelt. ripis: according to Plato (Phd. 113) the rivers Cocytus and Pyrithlegethon surround Tartarus. In Phaed. v. 1227, we have "Phlegethon nocentes igneo singens vado". Cf. Verg. Aen. 6, 551. ligatos: for this use of ligo (= surround), of rivers, see the similar use of alligo, referred to in note on v. 98.

1 Handbook of Classical Drama (Stanford, 1944) p. 419.
squallidae: see on v. 14.

743-9: Medea invokes four of the five famous examples of suffering evil-doers in Hades. Tityos is omitted. This is a favourite theme in Latin poetry and above all in Seneca. 1 Perhaps closest to the present passage is NO v. 1068 ff., for there too the sinners are temporarily relieved of their punishments (by the music of Orpheus). In the case of a common-place theme such as this it is very difficult to decide if Seneca had any particular model in mind. He may also have been influenced by paintings of the theme. 2

743. novus: already tinged with the meaning "novel, strange" though this idea is not as strong as in v. 894.

744. Ixion. As a punishment for insulting Hera, he was bound to a revolving wheel (first mentioned in Pl. F. 2, 21). In Pindar the place of punishment is in the upper air, but by Alexandrian times (first in A.R. 3, 62), the punishment was regarded as happening in Hades.

745. Tantalus: punished in Hades for serving his son Pelops as a feast to the gods. Here Seneca mentions only one of the three punishments ascribed to him - the water that he can never drink. 3 This is frequently mentioned, together with the feast he can see but not eat. 4 The third punishment, more commonly mentioned in Greek poetry, was that of the over-

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1 Cf. HF v. 750 ff.; Phaed. v. 1229 ff.; Ag. v. 12 ff.; Thy. v. 4 ff.; v. 74 ff.; NO v. 750 ff.; 942 ff.; 1061 ff. Notable passages in other authors are Verg. Ass. 6, 595 ff.; Hor. Od. 3, 11, 21; Ov. Met. 10, 41 ff.


3 Cf. Ag. vv. 19, 769; Okt. v. 621; Tib. 1, 3, 78; Hor. Sat. 1, 1, 68; etc.

4 Cf. Hor. Od. 11, 582-92; HF v. 752; Thy. vv. 152-75; NO v. 1075; Ov. Met. 4, 457 etc.
hanging rock (cf. Thy. v. 76). The famous picture of the Underworld by Polygnotus (Paus. 10, 31, 12) depicted all three punishments. *securus* perhaps a reference to the overhanging rock. *undae ... Pirenidas*: the waters of Pirene a famous spring at Corinth. This then is an invitation for Tantalus to come to Corinth. *Pirenidas*: a rare adjective occurring only here and three times in Ovid.

746. *socero*: Creon; but "uni", "gravior ... poena" suggest that Seneca has Sisyphus in mind in this line as well as the next. The son seems almost identified with the father. This is a rather similar situation to that in v. 661, though there the father is named for the son. The use of "socero" makes clear the reason for Medea's enmity to Sisyphus. It also enables the line to be understood in another way as foreshadowing the fate of Creon.

747. Sisyphus' punishment for disobedience to the gods \(^1\) is first mentioned in Hom. Od. 11, 593-600. He was forced to roll up a hill in Hades a rock that always rolled back again. See also on v. 512.

748-9: the fifty Danaides were forced to marry their fifty cousins; all save Hymenaeus murdered their husbands on the wedding night. \(^2\) Their punishment in the underworld was to fill a bottomless cistern with water carried in sieves. This punishment is not however ascribed to the Danaides until the third century B.C. The Danaides, suggesting feminine violence within the

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\(^1\) Sisyphus was sentenced to die by Zeus for betraying his intrigue with Alcina. He escaped death by a trick, but when later he died a natural death suffered this eternal punishment.

\(^2\) Deianira (*HF* v. 946) offers to make up their number.
family, form an effective end to this invocation of the great sinners.

750-1: Hecate is invoked as goddess of the moon. *frons non una:* see on "trifoninis" v. 7. *passim inducta vultus:* for a similar use of the metaphor, see *Ag.* v. 707, "induit vultus feros". See also note on v. 43 above.

752-70: Medea lists her magic feats. Is this a list of past achievements or has she just performed them as a part of the present magic rites? The latter interpretation is certainly the more dramatic. Note too that "adesse sacris tempus est, Phoebe, tuis" (v. 770) suggest that the feats were a necessary prerequisite for further rites to Phoebe/ Hecate. Again "tibi" (v. 752) would have greater meaning for the goddess if Medea had just performed these feats. Further we have Medea's earlier threats, "sternam et evertam osmeria" (v. 414) and "invasion deos et cuncta quatiam", (vv. 424-5). See on v. 401 ff. for a discussion of the fact that Medea here reverses the conditions listed there.

752-3. Loose, flowing hair and bare feet were customary at magic rites. Both points are mentioned in *Ov.* Met. 7, 182; *Hor.* Sat. 1, 8, 23 ff; Stat. Theb. 9, 572. The flowing hair is also mentioned in *Ov.* Her. 6. 89.

753-4. *luxuravi:* Miller's "trod" (p. 293) conveys the wrong impression. The verb contains the idea of quick and repeated movement. In most countries popular superstitions have existed that the weather can be controlled by witches. The Roman poets frequently introduce this into their lists of magic feats. For the particular point in this line, cf. *Ov.* Am. 1, 8, 9;

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1 Such catalogues involving feats of this type are common in Latin poetry: e.g. *Ov.* Am. 1, 8, 5 ff.; 2, 1, 23 ff.; *Her.* 6, 83; *Met.* 7, 199; *Ser.* 10452 ff.; Tib. 1, 2, 43 ff.; 1, 8, 17 ff.; Verg. Am. 4, 487 ff.; Prop. 4, 5, 9 ff.; Luc. 6, 431 ff.; Petr. 134. See further note on vv. 670-848.
755-6: as Kingery (p. 300) observes: "Two opposite movements of the sea are described". Oceanus: the Atlantic. The Mediterranean is tideless, aestibus victis: the retreating tides are forced back and over the land. Interius: inland. cf. L.s.s. Interius B. For other instances of magic power over the sea, see on vv. 766-7 below.

757-89. For witches' influence over the heavenly bodies, cf. Luc. 6, 462-5, A.R. 3, 533; Verg. Aen. 4, 489; vv. 673-4 above; vv. 760-9 below. Solem et astra: for this point, cf. HQ v. 462; 471. vetitum: see note on "siccas" v. 404. tetigisti, urrese: see Thy. vv. 867-8 for a prophecy that this will happen some day.

759-61. For power to change the seasons, cf. HQ vv. 456, 469 ("brum a meses videat"); Tib. 1, 2, 50; Pet. 134 (vv. 1, 3). See further on v. 754 above. 761. This power to make rivers flow backwards is another stock illustration of the power of magic. Cf. A.R. 3, 532; Verg. Aen. 4, 489; Tib. 1, 2, 44; Prop. 1, 1, 23; Ov. Am. 1, 8, 6; 2, 1, 26. Her. 6, 87; Met. 7, 154; Petr. 134 (v. 6); Claud. in Ruf. 1, vv. 159-60; Preisendanz 4, 3052-4.

762. violenta: probably predicative, for in v. 211 we have "placidis flexibus Phasis".

763. Hister: the lower Danube. tot ora: Kingery is wrong when he suggests (p. 300) that this is an inaccurate reflection of the fact that the Nile had seven mouths. The Danube has three main mouths and several lesser outlets. Tacitus' description (Germ. 1.1) is fairly sound." Danuvius ... plures populos adit, donec in Ponticum more sex meatibus erumpat, septimum os paludibus hauritur."
765-6: for a raging sea though the winds are calm, cf. HO vv. 455-6; Luc. 6, 469-70. For power to raise or calm the sea at will, see also Ov. Met. 7, 200-1, Petr. 134 (vv. 4-6) tumuit insanum mare: cf. HO v. 552, "Tumuit et rabidum mare" (though there "deus" is subject). insanum: also used of the sea in Phaed. vv. 351; 700; Ag. vv. 540; 599. cf. Verg. Eol. 9, 43; Ov. Her. 1, 6. Seneca also used the word of winds (see Canter p. 107).

766-7: Thomann rightly has a stop after "meae". Pace Kingery (p. 301) there would be shadows in the heart of the woods whether daylight returned or not. The reference is surely to the phenomenon of the walking forest, a common enough feature of magic lists; cf. Verg. Aen. 4, 491; Ov. Met. 7, 205; 14, 406; Her. 6, 88; Petr. 134 (v. 15); Stat. Theb. 7, 115; Claud. in Rufin 1, 158. This was one of Orpheus' powers too (see above vv. 229; 629). memoris antiqui domus/ amavit umbres: a bold expression, yet one that has echoes elsewhere in the tragedies. domus: according to Th. L.L. (s. domus IA2b) this striking use of domus with reference to woods is confined to Seneca. Cf. If v. 239, "memoris opulentí domos", and Oed. v. 228 (though here Leo emends to "comam"). Note too the collocation "umbrosi domum" in v. 741. For the idea of loss of shade, see vv. 608-9.

768. Thomann retains relict6, the difficult reading of the MSS. Leo's reduct6 is much more plausible; see LS.s. reduco IA1b for examples of its use in this context. The word here, with "imperio" in the previous line, might have a military touch to it (see LS.s. reduco IA2b). die reducto: cf. Ov. Am. 2, 1, 24 and less specifically, Ov. Met. 7, 20; Petr. 134 (vv. 9-10).

769. Hyades: see on v. 312.

770. Phoebe: originally a Titan, mother of Leto, but in Latin poetry freely identified with Luna, Diana or Hecate.
771-86: Medea lists her offerings in alternate iambic trimeters and dimeters.

771. *tibi*: as in vv. 752, 773 and 797-807. Such anaphora is characteristic of the hymn-style.

772. Typhon: a hundred-headed monster who attempted to dethrone Zeus.

haec ... membra: the giants had feet like snakes (cf. Ov. Trist. 4, 7, 17 and HO v. 169). See also on vv. 409-10 above.

775-6: for Nessus, see on vv. 639-42. *dedit*: i.e. to Deianira.

777-8. Oetaeae, Herculea: see on vv. 639-42. *virus Herculeum*: i.e. Hercules' poisoned blood, *bibit*: for the metaphorical use of *bibo* in the tragedies, see above p. 38 and Canter (p. 111). Closest to the present example are HE v. 488; TRO. v. 1164; Ag. v. 700, where tombs or altars drink blood.

779-80: for Althaea's story, see on v. 646. *piac sororiam, impiac matris*: surely influenced by Ov. Met. 8, 475-7, "incipit esse tamen melior geminam parente/ et ... / inpictate pia est."

781-2: the harpies, half-woman, half-bird had been robbing the food of the blind seer Phineus (cf. Thy. v. 153) but Zetes and Calais (see on vv. 231, 634) had chased them away as far as the Strophades. See A.R. 2, 178-300.

783-4: the Stymphalian birds lived in a swamp near Stymphalos in Arcadia. Hercules killed these monsters as his sixth labour. *Lernaean*: his arrows were poisoned with the gall of the Lernaean Hydra.

785-6. *tripodas ... coeotias*: a deliberate echo of "tripodas movet" (v. 86) that emphasises Medea's power and the futility of the chorus' hopes. "Neos" is stressed.

787-342: Medea's prayers.

787. *Trivias*: Hecate, who was worshipped at the cross-roads, which all
ages have been centres of magical activity. The epithet *Trivia* is found in Latin as early as Ennius (fr. 25, Ribbeck 1, 68) and occurs elsewhere in the tragedies at *Ag.* v. 382 and *Ost.* v. 978. Hecate appears as both moon-goddess and goddess of the cross-roads as early as Sophocles (*Rhizotomoi*, frg. 492 in Nauck, *Trag.* Graec. *Frag.*).

789-92: another reference to the chosen of drawing down the moon. See on v. 676 above. Apparently this charm was a popular explanation of eclipses (see Schol. on A.R. 3, 533).

790-1. *Thessalica ... minis*: Thessaly was the most famous centre of magic in ancient times,¹ (see Plin. *N.H.* 30, 1) and was particularly known for the moon charm.² Menander wrote a play, *Theutale* (Plin. *N.H.* 30, 7) with this theme. See also Hor. *Epod.* 5, 45. "*quae sidera excantate voce Thessala/ lunamque caelo dedit*, i:lli!:ed. vv. 420; 791. *freno*: continues idea of "*currus*" v. 787.

792. *legit*: "skirts" - a nautical metaphor; see IS.s. *lego* IB 7.

793. *fundus*: also used of light in *HF* v. 1058; (as is *infundo* in *Phaed.* v. 154). See Th.L.L. s. *fundo* IBb for other examples. For other metaphorical uses of *fundus*, see on v. 113. *face*: also used of the moon, in v. 842; *Thy.* v. 836, see Th.L.L. s. *feco* III 2 for other examples.

795. *Dictynna*: originally a name of a Cretan goddess Britomartis, called Dictynna because in fleeing Minos she fell into a fisherman's net ( dikto[v]. Britomartis was identified with Artemis and hence here with Hecate.

796. *sonent αγάς*: during an eclipse it was customary to beat drums, clash

¹ See on v. 720 above.

² See Ar. *Nu.* vv. 749-50.
cymbals etc., to aid the moon. Cf. Ov. Met. 4, 333; Liv. 26, 5, 9; Tac. Ann. 1.26. Roman writers (though not apparently Greeks earlier than the Roman empire) also mention this practice in connection with the drawing down of the moon by witches; e.g. Pliny, v. 793; Ov. Met. 7, 207; Mod. Pass. 41; Tib. 1, 6, 22; Mart. 12, 57, 16; Stat. Theb. 6, 685; Juv. 6, 442, aera; generally mentioned in this connection. Bronze was believed to have magic powers: see above on "tibon" (v. 726).

796. pretiosa ... aera Corinthi: the most famous type of bronze in Roman days, Kingery (p. 503) seems to have swallowed Pliny's story (H. N. 34, 3, 6) that Corinthian bronze was discovered accidentally when bronze was mingled with gold and silver vessels during the fire at the sack of Corinth by Hanno in 146 B.C. 1 However Corinth 2 was an important centre for the production of bronzes as early as the seventh century. 2 The use of Corinthian bronze here is characteristic of Seneca's love of "point".

797-807: note again the anaphora of "tibi".

797. caespite: an altar made of turf, as in Ov. Met. 7, 240.

798-9. de medio ... sepulchro fex: witches traditionally haunted graveyards, 3 there they sought herbs, parts of bodies, or objects associated with the dead, often in connection with necromancy. Erichthon used to steal torches from funeral pyres (Inc. 6.525; 535) and this practice is mentioned too in the necromancy scene in Oed. v. 550. The present phrase, together with

1 Trimalchio (Petr. 50) knew better!

2 See W. Lamb, Greek and Roman Bronzes, pp. 77; 88-9; etc.

3 Cf. Hor. Epod. 17, 47; 5, 100 ff.; Sat. 1, 6, 17 ff.; Ov. Hor. 6, 89; Tib. 1, 2, 46; Inc. 6, 539-53.
"funereus de more" (v. 802) and "Stygia/ramus ab unda" (v. 804-5), apart from its appropriateness to the rites of Hecate, also foreshadows the death of Creon and Creusa. *fax:* in this scene, there is a play on the word of much the same type as that in the idea of Furies as bridesmaids implies in vv. 15-7 and v. 38. Instead of the wedding torches (cf. v. 67) we have a torch from a funeral pyre and the "tristem lucem" of the moon's "face" (v. 792). At the end of the scene the contrast becomes brutally explicit; "vincatque suas/flagrante coma nova nupta faces" (vv. 838-9). *nocturnos... ignes:* foreshadows the palace fire.

802-3. *vitta,* a woollen hair-band, was worn by priests, priestesses and others making sacrifice (see vv. 797-8), *funereus de more:* i.e. with flowing locks (cf. Plu. Quaest. Rom. 11) bound only with a simple *vitta.* Leo (1.221) points out that with *de more,* it is highly unusual for an adjective to be used, except one that itself contains the idea of "customary." The only other exception being "infans de more" (Stat. Theb. 4, 243).

*jacens:* "lying flat"; i.e. without an elaborate hairdo.

804-5. *Stygia/ramus ab unda:* Kingery (p. 303) suggests that this is the "fax" of v. 799. But more probably it is a new offering. It was customary to deck sacrificial altars with boughs and foliage, these were termed *verbenses* (cf. Serv. in Verg. Aen. 12, 120). Probably Medea's "ramus" would be of cypress, yew or pitch-pine, trees traditionally associated with death.

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1. Note that the Furies too commonly *fucce* torches from pyres: e.g. *HF* v. 103; Ov. *Met.* 6, 430.

2. Branches of these trees were attached to the door of a house where a death had occurred.

809-10. caros ... cruores: a hint at the child murder, though Medea has not yet clearly acknowledged this. (see on vv. 917-22).

810. laticem: Medea's blood. Usually the word refers to water (see Canter, p. 126), though in Oed. v. 492 it is used of wine.

814. Persae: i.e. Hecate, daughter of Pesse (and granddaughter of Persa and Sol) Cf. A.R. 3, 467; 478; 1035; 4, 1020; Ov. Met. 7, 74; Rem. Am. v. 263.

815. Orcus: according to Parnell (Cults I, 518) Hecate "does not seem to have taken to hunting or the bow". Here then she is identified with Artemis.

816. Jason: i.e. she had invoked Hecate when she had helped Jason in Colchis and in the rejuvenation of Aeson. (cf. Ov. Met. 7, 241).

817. tu: probably Medea is addressing a phial; for this would be somewhat abrupt as an address to Hecate, and besides she is invoked to help the poison in v. 832.

818-9. imas/urat ... flamma medullas: again an ironic reference to the marriage-night, for these are standard words to express love. serpens: this word is frequently used of fire (e.g. cf. Oed. v. 284; and LS. s. serp 3B), but here recalls Medea's gathering of snake poison (vv. 684-704).

820. auro: two of Medea's gifts to the bride were made of gold (vv. 572-4). Since Medea has already mentioned the "vestes", "auro" is surely a reference to these other gifts, not to a casket as Hadas (p. 33) and Miller (p. 297) have it.

820-31. Medea lists the magic fires that she has obtained from experts in this field. A rather otiose bit of mythological lore.

822-4. As a punishment for giving fire to mortals, Prometheus was bound at
Zeus' command to a crag in the Caucasus where an eagle kept eating his ever-growing vitals. For other references to his fate, see HF v. 1206; HO v. 1378.

825. Mulciber: a surname of Vulcan that refers to the power of fire to melt metals.

827. cognato: both Medea and Phaethon were descendants of the Sun. See on v. 32 ff.; 599 ff.

828. Chimaera: a monster which consisted of a lion in front, a goat in the middle and a dragon at the rear. The goat part vomited fire. Lucr. (5. 901 ff) points out the practical difficulties entailed in this picture!

829. tauri: a reference to the bulls of Colchis. See vv. 121; 241; 466.

831. felle Medusae: perhaps Seneca is thinking of the story (see Apollod. 3, 120) that after the Gorgon was killed by Perseus, blood sprang from two veins; Asclepius used the blood from one vein to revive the dead and from the other to harm men. tacitum: for this use ("secret") see LS.s.

tacitus A2b.

833. stimulos: used metaphorically also at Ag. vv. 133; 720; Phoen. v. 207. See further note on "stimulatus", v. 591 above.

834. semina flammae: there is a Lucretian ring about this phrase; semen is one of the latter's words for "atom" (1,59) cf. particularly "ignis semina" (6, 160; 200). Perhaps though Seneca's immediate source is Vergil's "semina flammae" (Aen. 6.6).

835-39: perhaps this concentrated picture of horror has been influenced by Euripides' more diffuse and subtle treatment in his Messenger's speech (Eur. Med. vv. 1186-1201). Note the effective use of chiasmus in vv. 835-6; 837-8.
838. vincat: perhaps an ironic echo of the "vincit" of v. 75.
839. faces: see note on v. 799.
840-2. In these lines, Medea stresses the power of Hecate by echoing words and ideas used earlier in the play: "audax" has ironic echoes of vv. 301, 318, 346, 607; "lucifera", so frequently used of the morning star, emphasizes the vanity of the chorus' invocation of "gemini praevia temporis", v. 71; "latratus" links Hecate with the danger that Argo had earlier faced (see vv. 351-4).
840. ter: three is a magic number in most folklores. Cf. e.g. Oed. v. 569; Ov. Met. 7, 261; Tib. 1, 2, 54. latratus: Hecate is accompanied by a pack of hounds; cf. A.R. 3, 1216; Theoc. 2, 35; Verg. Aen. 6, 257; Hor. Sat. 1, 8, 35; Tib. 1, 2, 52; Sen. Oed. v. 569; Thy. v. 673; Luc. 6, 733; Stat. Theb. 4, 429.
842. lucifera: for the reasons given in the note on vv. 840-2, this reading of E is perhaps preferable to "luctifera" of A, which Thomann adopts. Miller (1, 299) reads "lucifera", but translates "luctifera."
843. peracta via est omnis: in view of the chorus' description (vv. 849-76) and Medea's subsequent actions, it is better to take this phrase as meaning "all my power is marshalled" (Miller 1, 299), rather than accept Kingery's idea (p. 304) that her violence is spent. hoc natos voca: addressed to the Nurse.
845-8. cf. E. Med. vv. 969-75, though there the gifts are supposed to persuade Creusa not to allow the children to be banished, while in Seneca her alleged purpose is, less specifically, to win her favour for the children.
845. ite ite: another instance of conduplicatio in excited speech.
See p. 32 above.
848. ultimo exemplum: as in v. 552. Again an ominous double-entendre.
CHAPTER FIVE

Fourth Chorus (vv. 849-878)

In these fine lines the Chorus describe the wild appearance of Medea, expresses its fears as to her intentions and prays for night to fall swiftly and bring relief.

There are many similarities with the Nurse's description of Medea (vv. 360 ff). See the passage from de Ira 1, 1, 3-6 quoted on vv. 382-90.

There is also a sardonic reprise of several ideas contained in the first chorus. The tiger, formerly associated with Bacchus in a joyous picture (v. 85), is now a dangerous beast linked with Medea (v. 864) and the savage aspect of Bacchus passed over in the earlier passage emerges in "maenas" (v. 849); the red and white complexion of a fair bride blushing (vv. 99-101) reappears in Medea's frenzied appearance (vv. 858-9); earlier (vv. 71-4) the evening-star was eagerly awaited by lovers and by brides and their mothers, but it is now urged to hasten so as to end the day's horrors.

There are few obvious borrowings in this short chorus. The metre is probably iambic dimeter catalectic though some (e.g. Kapnukajas, p. 146) treat it as anacreontic.

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1. Cf. "quo rapi... pedem" v. 380, and "quonam rapitur, vv. 849-51; "gressus tuliit" v. 362 and "efflet ... gressum" vv. 870-2; "hoc et huc" v. 385, and "hoc ... illuc" v. 862; "motu effero" v. 385, and "feroci ... motu" vv. 854-5; "flammatia facies" v. 387, and "flagrant genus" v. 858; "citat" v. 387 and "citatus" v. 853; "minatur" in v. 390 and v. 856; and more generally v. 389 and vv. 860-1; v. 393 and vv. 851-2.

849. cruenta; cf. vv. 810-1. maenas; cf. vv. 383; 806. This is a favourite image in the tragedies; e.g. Tro. v. 673; Phoen. v. 365; Hec. v. 243; v. 700.


851-2. impotenti ... furore; note the adjective at end of one line, with its noun at the end of the next. Cf. vv. 854-5; 870-1.

854. riget; originally "to be stiff with cold", this word is frequently used more generally. See Canter pp. 121-2 and L&S. rigeo I.

858-61. a fine description of Medea's features. For such alternations of red and paleness as manifestations of emotions, cf. Ov. Met. 7, 78 (Medea's love for Jason); Met. 6, 465 (Althaea's conflicting emotions). There are several such changes in face colour in the tragedies, closest to the present passage being Her. Oct. vv. 251-3:

nunc inardescunt genae,
pallor ruborem pellit et formas dolor
errat per omnes.

Cf. also Phaed. v. 376; Oed. v. 849; Ag. v. 237; Hec. v. 1722; de Ira 3, 4, 1.

858. flagrant: only here of physical appearance in the tragedies; for its use of the emotions, see Canter p. 120. For metaphors from fire, see on v. 390.

859. fugat: for a similar use of the metaphor with abstracts, cf. v. 943.

See also p. 37 above for this and other metaphors from warfare.

859-61. note the homooteleuton, "ruborem ... colorem".

860. vagante: for this metaphor cf. "mors ... vagatur" (Oct. v. 322);
"pervagatus ... furor" (Ag. v. 775) and L.S.s. *vagor* II.

862. *huc fort pedes et illuc*: cf. the fragment of Ovid's *Medea* quoted by the elder Seneca (Surg. 3.7): "feror huc illuc, vae, plena deo". See on v. 123.

863–5. The source of this simile may be Ov. *Met.* 6, 636–7, "veluti Gangeticus servus/ lactentem fetum per silvas tigris opacas", where Procris is about to kill her son Itys. Cf. also Thy. vv. 707–8, where the vengeful Atreus is likened to a hungry tiger "silvis ... in Ganeticis", and *Herc. Ost.* vv. 241–5, where the jealous Deianira is compared to a tigress.

Note that in E. *Med.* v. 1342, Medea is termed a lioness. *orba natis*: not careless use of the simile (Cleasby, p. 61) but dramatic irony; the chorus feels Medea is distressed at the prospect of separation from her children (cf. vv. 541–9).

864–5. *Iustrat .... nemus*: the simile is attached more closely to Medea by the fact that she used these words of herself in v. 754.

865. *Ganeticum*: an effective use of the particular.


866. *fprepare*: see on vv. 3, 592.

868–9: cf. vv. 582, 591 above. Note also Hypsipyle's words to Jason (Ov. *Her.* 6. 76): "cor dolet atque ira mixtus abundat amor".

868. *causae*: a metaphor from the law courts, used with the meaning of *partea*. See L.S.s. *causa* II 82 for parallels.


873. *reges*: Creon and Jason.

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1 See Oed. v. 458, for another Ganges tiger.
874 ff: there is an inconsistency here: Medea's day of grace was to end at
dawn not at sunset (see vv. 297-9). There is an invocation to the sun in E.
Med. v. 1258 ff.; but there the sun is urged to drive away Medea.
876. condat ... lucem: cf. Lucr. 4, 433. alma: as Kingery (p. 305) observes
often applied to dies, sol, lux etc. Also of nox in Tro. v. 438; Ag. v. 73.
Note that the present line stands at the centre of a tricolon of which the
first and last parts consist of two lines; again Seneca reveals a love of
framing (see Kapnukajas, p. 148).
877. mergat: for other examples of this metaphorical use of the word in
the tragedies see Canter (p. 121). For the use of the word in this context
see Bardon, NEL, 24, (1946), 106-7.
876. cf. v. 71.

Act Five (vv. 879-1027)

Scene One (vv. 879-91)

A messenger enters and announces that Creon and his daughter have
perished in flames. He elaborates a little in answer to the chorus's questions,
but then apparently leaves the stage; at least he plays no further part in
the play.

In Euripides' Medea, the messenger informs Medea of the calamity, and
after reproaching her for her unconfessed joy, launches into a full account
(E. Med. vv. 1136-1230). This pathetic description is one of the finest
passages in Euripides.

Butler severely criticizes Seneca's messenger-scene for awkwardness
and obscurity. But Medea (vv. 817-39) made quite clear the connection between

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the gifts and the fire, which Butler finds so difficult. As Browne observes, Seneca's briefer treatment is caused by the desire for dramatic economy. After the long description of Medea's magic preparations, an equally elaborate description of the effect of the magic would be quite out of place. Such a description would also rob the scenes in which Medea kills her children "coram populo" of much of their impact. The flat tone of the conversation sets off by contrast the horror of what has happened.


881. Its three brief questions in this scene are the only occasions in Medea where the chorus says anything, apart from the choral odes. capti ... sapit: again, conversation proceeds by one speaker "picking up" words uttered by the other. Cf. "potuit ... potuisse" (vv. 682-4); "funda flammans" (in vv. 887 and 889) and see on vv. 159-73 above.

883-4. Medea's vengeance is stressed by the Messenger's using very similar words to those with which Medea expressed her disbelief at hearing the wedding song (vv. 117-8).

884. quis elatia modus: cf. vv. 397-8. For the omission of est, see on v. 19.

885. avidus: for other examples of the use of the word of fire, see Th.L.L. s. avidus IV. It is frequently used metaphorically in the tragedies: see Canter (p. 107). furit: for other examples of the metaphorical use of this word and others from sickness, see Canter (p. 110). Other instances of fire

"raging" are HF v. 106; HO vv. 285; 1958.

887. unde: water, as in v. 649 etc.

888-90. The file imagery used of Medea (cf. vv. 387; 390; 410; 579-82; 591-4) makes the audience think here of her lust for revenge and the paradox "ipse praesidia occupat" suggests the unnaturalness of child-murder.

890. occupat: see Canter (p. 116) for other instances of this metaphor and others from warfare in the tragedies. Here with "praesidia", the military flavour remains stronger than in most examples.

Scene Two (vv. 893-977)

This scene is virtually a monologue by Medea, for the Nurse, after advising her mistress at the outset to flee, plays no further part. The climax of the scene, where Medea, goaded by the apparition of her brother, kills one son is psychologically effective, but the impact of vv. 895-915 suffers from Medea's having said the same sort of thing before, and the conflict between revenge and mother-love is too drawn-out. Medea's speech is of course replete with rhetorical devices and effects.

891-2. These lines echo E. Med. vv. 1121-3, though there they are spoken by the Messenger, not the Nurse.

893. egoen ut recedam: see note on v. 398 and cf. v. 929.

894. specto: Anliker (p. 120, n. 246) notes the stress in the tragedies on the idea of watching, especially, as here, in the context of watching the torments of an enemy (cf. Ag. vv. 758, 875; Thy. v. 505 f.; 712 f.) or where the victim is made to see his own punishment (see on v. 992 f. below). Anliker
plausibly suggests the influence on Seneca of the gladiatorial games. Though Seneca condemns the cruelty of the games and the spectators (e.g. Ep. 7, 3-5; 90, 45; 95, 33; Prev. Vit. 13, 6), one cannot help feeling even in the prose works that he himself is fascinated as well as repelled by bloodshed and cruelty. In the tragedies this tendency is given freer rein. Seneca's attitude seems that of the crowd in Trag. v. 1128 f.: "magna pars vulgi levis/ odit scelus, spectatque," novas: see on v. 743.

895-915: Medea urges herself to commit more unnatural crimes. Cf. vv. 40-55; 397-414; 562-7. A similar theme exists in E. Med. vv. 401-9; 1240-50, but there is handled in a more restrained manner.

895. quid animo cessas: for the invocation of animo, see p. above. The present phrase occurs at beginning of v. 842 in HO and very similar phrases occur at the same line position in Med. v. 937; Oed. v. 1024; Ag. v. 198; Thy. v. 423; HO v. 1828. Cf. also v. 988 below. impetus: see on v. 157.

896. pars ... quota: as in HF vv. 383; 1191.

900. Note the striking chiasmus. abeat expulsum pudor: echoed in HO v. 1417, "abeat egressus dolor", also at the line-end.

901. purae manus: explained by "quidquid admissum est adhuc, pietas vocetum", vv. 904-5.

902. incumbe: the only example in the tragedies of the metaphorical use of the word.

904. haurit: see Canter (p. 111) for examples of the metaphorical use of this word. Note that Seneca uses haurit metaphorically of the emotions,

1 See on vv. 530; 550; 907. Cf. Trag. vv. 1087; 1125; 1128 f. See Regenbogen (p. 53) for a discussion of the influence of the amphitheatre on the prose works.

2 See Regenbogen (p. 46 ff.) and pp. 19, 22 above.
whereas biba-metaphors are of inanimate objects absorbing liquids (as in v. 778). Note that the drink-image is continued in v. 906, with "vulgaris notae".

906. vulgaris notae: see on v. 394. For this metaphor from the wine-cellar (cf. Hor. Sat. 1, 10, 24, "nota Falerni"), see Canter p. 111. Cf. also Sen. Ben. 3, 9, 1: "quaedam non sunt ex hac vulgaris nota sed meliore".

907. commodavi: "lent". scelera: emphatically placed and rather unexpected after "commodavi". proelusit: the word also occurs in the tragedies at NF v. 222; Trag. v. 182; Phaed. v. 1061. It is interesting that Seneca uses the word as a technical term in his theory of emotion: "principia proeluentia affectibus" (de Ira 2, 2, 5) are the first involuntary impulses that occur in response to stimuli (see on vv. 116-24). See Canter (p. 112) for other metaphors from amusements; perhaps again the amphitheatre is in Seneca's mind.


910. Medea nunc sum: cf. vv. 166; 171. It would be wrong to declare Medea a developing character on the strength of vv. 171 and 910. Medea has been presented from the beginning of the play (cf. especially vv. 41-53) as lusting for a savage revenge; she has now decided on the ingenious means of achieving it, that will make her the Medea of tradition. The audience would appreciate the sententia and expect the child-murder shortly. oravit ingenium

1 As does W. Steidle, "Bemerkungen zu Senecas Tragedien: II Medea Rasheplan," Philologus 96 (1944), 263.
malis: there is a play on two meanings of "malis" ("misfortunes" and "evil-deeds"). The latter meaning is probably upper-most, but it is likely that Medea also intends a mocking echo of the Stoic idea that misfortune is the proving-ground for virtue (see on v. 159).

911-5. Note how Medea’s excited relish in her past crimes is aided by the anaphora (and conpremiumia in v. 911) of "iuvat" and the jingles "iuvat rapuissetse ..., iuvat secuisse" and "spoliassse ..., amasse" in the same line-positions. For other passages expressing delight in crimes, cf. vv. 991-2; Thy. v. 491 ff.; 707-16; 911 ff. See also on v. 50 above. 912-3 arcana ... sacra: the golden fleece. cf. "arcanus aries" (Thy. v. 226), though of a different golden ram.

914. dolor: see on v. 139.

915. non rudes dextrum: i.e. her crimes have trained her. Cf. "manus ... rudes" (v. 908).

916-25: the idea of child-murder finds open expression.

916. ira: for apostrophe of ira, cf. v. 953; HF v. 75; Oct. v. 820. See also p. 31 above.

917-22. Medea herself now acknowledges clearly the idea of killing the children — an idea which has been gradually emerging from her subconscious. See notes on vv. 26; 549-50; 809-10. The sudden transitions in these lines would give ample scope to the declaimer’s histrionic talent. The thought sequence is not unlike that in vv. 24-6 and "peperit" (v. 922) seems a

1 Cf. vv. 563-4, for the idea that crime leads to worse crime.

2 Henry and Walker, CF, 62 (1967), 181, are too dogmatic on this passage.
deliberate echo of "peperi" (v. 26). Here however she is clearly contemplating murder (cf. vv. 929-30) and attempts to suppress her mother love by claiming the children are Creusa's.

920. For a similar bloodthirsty wish, cf. v. 125.

922-3. Note alliteration of p and the use of "placuit" at the beginning and end of the sentence. Cf. vv. 947; 984 for other examples of this type of anaphora, termed "avadentaecis" (Rhet. Lat. Minor. 50, 19).

923. ultimum: in double sense of "last" and "most dreadful".


926-57: the conflict between maternal love and the lust for revenge. This theme is superbly handled in E. Med. vv. 1022-80 (cf. also vv. 894-931; 1236-50). Seneca's treatment is forceful, and effective rhetoric, but lacks the subtlety and pathos of Euripides. Our emotions are less involved in Seneca's lines, partly because the children have never been effectively presented and Medea's love for them has not been stressed. ¹ Chrysippus (R.V.F. 3, 124) used Medea's monologue in Euripides, with its conflict between passion and reason (vv. 1078-80) to illustrate his intellectualist theory. Seneca however is not here exemplifying Stoic doctrine, but is intent on exploiting to the full the rhetorical possibilities of the conflict between mother-love and revenge. ² He is clearly influenced by the passionate speeches in which Ovid's heroines describe the conflicting emotions by which they are torn, and

¹ Brady however (p. 258) errs in suggesting that the mother-love now expressed by Medea would surprise the audience. The motif is present in vv. 144-5; 282; 541-3. Note also Jason's view in vv. 541-3.

² See M. Pohlenz, Die Stoa (Gottingen, 1948), 2, 325.
in particular seems to have had Althaea in mind; see on vv. 926; 940 ff. (cf. on vv. 779-80 and 858-61 above).

926-7. Canter (pp. 76-7) gives a long list of similar descriptions of physical manifestations of fear and horror and criticises Seneca for (cf. Quint. 8, 3, 52).

928. mater ... condusit: perhaps an echo of Ov. Met. 8, 463, "pugnat materque sororque" and 475. In Trp. v. 960 we again have mater used for mother-love. This type of metonymy (see Canter pp. 131-2 for other examples) is often also an example of emphasis.1 See Summers (p. 252, on Ep. 76, 4) and the note on "Medea" (v. 167 above).

929. Note chiasmus.

930. fundam cruorem: cf. vv. 609-10. relius a demens furor: cf. vv. 139-40 for a similar exclamation. furor: also addressed by Daianira in H0 v. 434. See also p. 31 above.

931. dirum nefas: occurs in same line-position in H0 v. 1350.

932-4. Note the repetition of seclusum. This type of anaphora, which is mixed with other figures (here, question and answer) is termed πλόκη by Quintilian (9, 3, 41). See vv. 934-5; 933-4 and Canter (p. 160) for other examples.

933-6. Note successive alliteration of ñ, x and ñ.

934-5: a neat paradox, involving another example of πλόκη: "non sunt ne\[ ... ne\[ sunt".

1 Defined by Quint. (8, 3, 83) as "altiorem praeberet intellectum quam quae verba per se ipsa declarant."
935: **perseunt, sed sunt:** cf. "maius scelus/ Medea mater" (vv. 934-5).

935-6. **crimine et culpa sarent/ sunt innocentes:** cf. vv. 192-3 although here "crimine" surely means "crime".

937. **quid anima titubat:** see on vv. 41; 895.

939-43: perhaps derived from Ov. Met. 8, 470-2, where Althaea is likened to a ship caught between wind and tide. See Ag. vv. 138-40 for a like simile.

Note how the simile is attached more closely to Medea by "aestus" and "fluctuatur" being used of her emotions, while "discordes" and "dubium", normally used of persons, are used of the sea. Further military metaphors are used first of the winds ("bella ... gerunt") then of Medea's conflicting emotions ("fugat"). Though Seneca's use of imagery in these lines is scarcely subtle, it effectively conveys the violence of Medea's inner conflict.

940. **bella:** also used of winds in Th. v. 1079. See Canter (pp. 116-7) for other examples of this metaphor and of others from warfare.

942. **servat:** again a heat-metaphor is mixed with water imagery. See p. 43 above. For **servat** used of the sea, cf. Th. L.L. s.v. IIIA. Note that in v. 952, the word is used of Medea's hate.

943. **fluctuatur:** also used of emotions in Ag. v. 109. See Canter (p. 121) for other metaphorical uses.

943-5: another example of πλεκτή (see on vv. 932-4), here combined with chiasmus and apostrophe. For a similar use of "fugat", see vv. 858-9.

944. **dolor.** see on v. 139.

945-7. Cleanby (p. 63) compares E. Med. vv. 694-6, but the only real similarity is "in tékyn, tékyn deúro" (v. 894).

945-6. **uniones afflictæ domus/ solamen:** cf. TRO. v. 462. where Astyanax is termed "spes ... unica afflictæ domus*. **solamen:** cf. vv. 538-9, where
Jason offered "si quod ex soceri domo/ potest fugam levare solamen, pote."

In reply (v. 540 ff.) Medea asked for the children.

947-8. Note ἐνδιδόωσις (see on v. 922) and chiasmus.

950-1. Note the jingle "flentes, gementes", the play on "patri ... matri", the paronomasia "perant ... periere" and the alliteration of p. O scelus: this, Gromov's emendation is surely preferable to "osculis" of the MSS.

retained by Thomann.

952. fervet odium: see Canter (p. 120) for other examples of this word used metaphorically of the emotions. See also on v. 942 above. For metaphors from fire in the tragedies, see on v. 390, and pp. 434 above.

953. Erinyes: Medea is beginning to feel in the grip of a power outside herself; hallucination follows (vv. 948 ff.). For the Furies, see on vv. 13 ff. ira qua ducis sequor: a clear echo of Ov. Ner. 12, 209, "quo feret ira, sequar". ira: see on v. 916.

954-6. Niobe, daughter of Tantalus (cf. HF v. 390; Oed. v. 613; Ag. v. 392) had seven sons and seven daughters. She made derogatory remarks about Latona's small family and was turned into a rock on Mt. Sipylus, (cf. HF v. 390; Ag. v. 394; Oed. vv. 185; 1849). In Oed. v. 613, she emerges from the Underworld, still proudly counting her children's ghosts.

955. bisque septemos: used of Niobe's children in H0 v. 1850.

957. fratri patrique: for the idea and the sound-effect, cf. v. 488.

958-71. Medea sees the Furies and the ghost of her brother and kills her one
son. O'Brien-Moore\textsuperscript{1} points out that after Vergil the Fury becomes a hackneyed convention to imply madness impressively.\textsuperscript{2} Yet Seneca's use of the convention here is skilful and rings psychologically true. Medea's conscience cannot allow her to come to a sane decision to kill her children and under the stress of her inner conflict, she is directed by a vision of the Furies and by the ghost of her dead brother with whose murder she has been obsessed (see on v. 131). The brother's apparent demand for vengeance provides her with a convenient justification for the child-murder. Braginton\textsuperscript{3} lists other visions in the tragedies, resulting from intense emotion. The closest parallel is the vision of Deianira, for this too leads to action.

959. \textit{flammans iotus:} of their torches. Cf. vv. 15; 960; 962.

960. \textit{cruentas:} for their hands were bloody; cf. v. 13.

961-2. The Furies' whips are mentioned as early as A. Ch. v. 290,\textsuperscript{4} occasionally, as here, it is said that they have snakes coiled round these whips (cf. \textit{HP} v. 89; \textit{Troy.} vv. 96-7) but more often the snakes in the hair are mentioned (see on v. 14).

963-4. \textit{dispersae ...} \textit{membria:} cf. \textit{Phaed.} v. 1246 where the words are used of Hippolytus' body.

965. \textit{luminibus:} "eyes", but with "faces" there is a play on the original meaning.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{1} \textit{Madness in Ancient Literature}, Diss. Princeton (Weimar, 1924), pp. 180-1.

\footnote{2} It is even employed in satire; cf. Juv. 6, 28-9.

\footnote{3} \textit{The Supernatural in Seneca's Tragedies}, Diss. Yale (Menasha, 1933), p. 40.

\footnote{4} Cf. \textit{HP} v. 982; \textit{Oed.} v. 665; \textit{Iliad} v. 1003.
\end{footnotes}
966. Note alliteration of *p,*
970-1. Medea kills the first son. In Euripides (vv. 1271 ff.) the children are killed offstage, though their cries can be heard. Horace (A. P. v. 185) declared "ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet", which suggests that some author, perhaps the youthful Ovid, (cf. Cleasby, p. 64) may have done this.

974-5. tu: the living child, *tuum corpus*: addressed to the dead body of the first child.
977. *nunum*: "handiwork", as in v. 181.

Scene Three (vv. 970-1027)

Medea kills the second son before Jason's eyes and escapes in a chariot drawn by dragons. This scene corresponds to E. Med. v. 1293 ff., but is much shorter. In Euripides, both children are dead when Jason appears, and parallels in thought and language are few.

980. The *conduplicatio*, "hoc, hoc" and the awkward order "fortis armiferi cohares" convey Jason's lack of composure. *armiferi*: for an example of the word used rather differently, cf. v. 468.
982. Medea emerges on the roof-top.
982-4: echo vv. 483-8.
984. Note the alliteration of *r*, the *dridridrum*: (see on vv. 922-3) and chiasmus.
985. *plagida ... numina*: Medea is thinking of the gods invoked by the
chorus (v. 56 ff.); note "numine prospero" (v. 56), festum ... diem; echoes Creon's words (v. 300).

986-92. Medea is briefly torn again by an inner conflict — this time between revulsion and joy at her deed.

986. perfectum est scelus: cf. "factum est scelus" at the end of v. 842 in HO.


988-90: cf. HO vv. 307-12 for a similar temporary waning of emotion. anima; see on v. 4.

989. secidit: see Canter (p. 157) for examples of the word used metaphorically of the emotions.

989-91. Surely another example of παντεκτω ἡ (see on vv. 932-4), though Canter (p. 160) does not class it as such. Note the repetitions "paenitet facti ... misera, feci? misera? paeniteat ... feci."

990. misera ... misera: not an example of conduplicatio as Canter alleges (p. 157). The second "misera" is best taken as questioning the validity of the first.

991-2. In her joy at her handiwork, Medea resembles an Apollodorus or a Phaldrus: "Rident itaque gaudentque et voluptate multa perfruumuntur plurimumque ab iratorum vultu absunt, per otium saevi." (de Ira 2, 5, 3). Cf. also Thyestes' joyful outburst (Thy. v. 911 ff.) and Med. vv. 50; 911-5.

992-4. Anliker (p. 120, n. 246) points out that in several plays the victim is, as here, made to see his own ruin; cf. Thy. vv. 65 ff.; 753; 895; Phoen. vv. 531 ff.; 551 ff.¹ The word "spectator" (v. 993) supports the idea that

¹ Cf. v. 28 f.; HF v. 600; Phaed. v. 677 ff. for a related idea.
Seneca has been influenced by the gladiatorial combats (see on v. 894 above).

992. derat sta: presumably here she sees Jason.

997-1000. As Kingery (p. 309) observes, Medea is taunting Jason to carry out the threat made in vv. 996-7 and thus bury his sons as she has already buried Creon and Creusa. Note chiasmus in vv. 997-8.

999. functus: see L.s. v.I for other examples of functus for defunctus.

1002. perque communes fugae: perhaps an echo of Medea's plea to Jason, "perque præsteritos metus" (v. 480).

1003. quos non nostra violavit fides: a wry touch; after all (cf. vv. 434-41) Jason had no chance to be unfaithful.

1006. hac: i.e. in the body of the living son. As Kingery observes (p. 309) Medea is recalling her thoughts of v. 550 ("vulnérī pudīvit locus") and v. 565 ("hac aggredere qua") and giving them a brutally physical significance.

1006. ferrum exigam: as in v. 126.

1007. i nunc superbe: Mendell (p. 167) wrongly sees the influence of satire here (cf. vv. 197; 650). The idiom takes a very similar form in HF vv. 89-90, "i nunc superbe, caelitum sedes pete/ humana tenne." virginum thalamus pete: echoed by HO v. 419. "virginum thalamos petit."

1011. angustus: for this use, cf. v. 292.

1012-3. Leo (1, 208) comments: "qualiū Medea matrem dicit? an semet ipsam propria igitur viscera ense se scrutaturam profitetur; quod sane tantillum saltum Jason fiisset solacii". He therefore wishes to delete these two lines. This quotation may serve to illustrate the basic weakness of that great scholar's approach to Seneca; he expects the author and his characters to meet his own high standard of logic. Face Leo these two lines are sound;
they are a more hyperbolic version of the idea of vv. 954-6.

1013: another brutal reprise of an earlier phrase (cf. v. 40). There "viscera"'s main meaning is "entrails", but again there is something of a double-entendre, for the idea of children is present. For the threat to kill an unborn child, cf. NO vv. 345-6.

1015. Jason's instruction "perage" and Medea's response, "perfruere lente ascelere" suggests that by "moram ... dona" Jason is asking for a quick death for his son, not a delay, as Kingery (p. 309) suggests. *Dona* than is used here in sense of *residuo* (cf. Th. L.L. s. v. III.2). The vocabulary of 1014-5 echoes Medea's request for a delay: note "supplex ... illud extremum precor" (v. 282) and "precor ... largire ... moram" (v. 288). It is this delay Medea has in mind when she replies "tempore accepto utimur" (v. 1017).

1016. *dolor*: see on v. 139.

1017. *meus dies est*: cf. Creon's promise in v. 295 (note also vv. 399; 421). Leo plausibly suggests (1, 153) that Seneca is here echoing the famous phrase that Severus Cornelius (quoted in Sen. Sages. 2, 12) put in the mouths of soldiers, who were feasting the day before battle: "hic meus est ... dies".1

1018. *misereri jubes*: a response to Jason's plea that she should not prolong the agony (v. 1015); i.e. Medea kills the son.

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1 Its fame is suggested by the elder Seneca's words in quoting it and by the fact that several poets imitate Severus' words, if not his meaning; cf. Luc. 4, 27; Val. Fl. 6, 733; Stat. Theb. 11, 485; 12, 366; Sili. 1, 457; 12, 633.
1019. bene est: see on v. 550. In Ὀἰδ., v. 998 we have "bene habet, peractum est", and in Ἀγ. v. 901; Ὅδ. vv. 1457; 1472, "habet, peractum est."

1020. lita: rel: cf. Ἀγ. v. 577. For other metaphors from religion, see p. 328 above and Canter (p. 112).

1022. sic fugere soles: i.e. in a chariot drawn by winged dragons. In E. Med. v. 1321, we learn that this was given her by Helios. The dragons are not mentioned by Euripides, but appear on South Italian vases of the fourth century and may well have been represented in front of the chariot in Euripides.

The chariot's used on earlier occasions ("sic fugere soles") in Medea's career is mentioned by Ovid (Met. 7, 220; 350; 391). In Euripides' play, the crane-like μεχανή was used to enable Medea to escape in her chariot, and no doubt Seneca could have made use of this device, if his play was acted on the stage.

1024. recipe iam natos: Medea hurls the bodies to Jason. In E. Med. v. 1378 ff. she determines to take them with her to bury them.

1026-7. T. S. Eliot (Selected Essays, p. 73) rightly comments: "It seems to be more effective if we take the meaning to be that there are no gods wherever Medea is, instead of a mere outburst of atheism." He adds (loc. cit.): "The final cry of Jason to Medea departing in her car is unique; I can think of no other play which resolves such a shock for the last word."

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1 See Page, Euripides Medea, p. xxvii.

2 Cf. Hor. Epod. 3, 14; Apollod. 1, 9, 28.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used for the Senecan tragedies:

Ag. (Agamemnon); Hf (Hercules Furens); Hg (Hercules Oetaeus); Med. (Medea);
Oct. (Octavia); Oed. (Oedipus); Phaed. (Phaedra); Phoen. (Phoenissae);
Thy. (Thyestes); TRO. (Troades).

Other Latin authors have been abbreviated as in Lewis and Short,
except that N.H. has been used for Pliny's Natural History, and N.Q. for
Seneca's Naturales Caesaestiones. Greek authors have been cited as in Middell-
Scott-Jones, except that Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, edited by H. von Arnim,
has been referred to as SVF.

Periodicals have been cited as in L'Année Philologique, except that
CP has been used for Classical Philology, TAPA for Transactions and
Proceedings of the American Philological Association; Hermath. for
Hermathena and Lat. for Latomus. Lewis and Short is referred to as LS,
Thesaurus Linguae Latinae as Th. L.L., and Pauly-Wissowa as Rw.

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