TIME

The play begins late afternoon (see on 71–4) on the wedding day of Jason and Creusa, and lasts a few hours. The action of a Senecan play more frequently commences at dawn (*HF, Pha., Oed., Ag., Thy.*).

ACT DIVISION

I have divided *Medea* into the conventional five-act division favoured by Seneca, whose choral odes seem clearly to have had an 'act-dividing' function. Of the other seven tragedies, *HF, Ag., Tro.,* and *Thy.* have a five-act structure. *Oed.* has six acts, and *Pha.,* too, may be considered a six-act play (see my edition p. 134). *Pho.* lacks choral odes and is either unfinished (as most scholars believe) or boldly experimental. Of the two non-Senecan plays in the corpus, *HO* has five acts and *Octavia* six. The five-act division is foreign to fifth century BCE Attic tragedy and seems to have entered Roman tragedy from Hellenistic drama. Its profound influence on Renaissance tragedy clearly derives from the Senecan tragic *corpus*. Notably the Elizabethan translators of 1581 divide all the plays of the *corpus* into five acts except for the incomplete *Thebais* (= *Phoenissae*) and *Octavia*, which are allocated four acts.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

The Latin MSS of the tragedies attributed to Seneca contain no stage directions as such, but do contain scene-headings (apparently not original) indicating the speakers in a particular scene, which are reproduced in this edition. It is, however, generally Seneca's practice (and the practice of ancient dramatists as a whole) to make stage directions implicit in both the dialogue and lyric sections of the play. Accordingly minimal stage directions have been added to the translation where appropriate. They are mainly concerned with the entry and exit of characters, props, asides, and changes of addressee, and are discussed in the Commentary when this seems required.

DISPOSITION OF ROLES

The three-actor rule of Greek tragedy, regarded as prescriptive by Horace (*AP* 192), was clearly not universally adhered to in Roman tragedy, as the ancient commentators note (see Brink 1971: 253–4). Seneca's *Oedipus* and *Agamemnon* require four speaking actors (in Act II and IV of the former, in Act V of the latter). Even where a play seems designed for three speaking actors, it is not clear that only three such actors were used. If three speaking actors (plus choric singers and *personae mutae*) did perform *Medea*, a possible assignment of roles (giving each of the actors time to change costume) may have been: Protagonist—Medea; Deuteragonist—Creon, Jason, Messenger; Tritagonist—Nurse. This assignment differs slightly from the probable assignment of roles in Euripides' *Medea*: Protagonist—Medea; Deuteragonist—the Nurse, Creon, Jason (perhaps Aegeus); Tritagonist—Tutor, Messenger (perhaps Aegeus); see Mastronarde (2002), 40. The role of the Nurse in Seneca's play is much larger than in that of Euripides. The care and economy shown in the disposition of speaking parts in Seneca's *Medea* strongly suggest a text designed for performance.

MASKS

The disposition of roles suggested above was facilitated on the ancient Roman stage by the use of masks. All tragic and comic drama at least from the late republic onwards was performed by actors wearing appropriate dramatic masks. For tragedy these became highly ornate and stylized, with a towering *onkos* or peak. The testimony of Suetonius (*Nero* 21.3) and Dio (63.9.5) indicates also the existence of veristic masks on the Neronian stage based on the features of historical persons, viz. Nero and Poppaea. Masks are likely to have been used in any staged performance of Seneca's *Medea* in imperial Rome.

ACT I (1–55)

The form of the opening acts of Seneca's tragedies varies. The iambic monologue is favoured in *HF, Tro., Med.,* and *Ag.*; in *Oed.* and *Thy.*

an iambic monologue leads to iambic dialogue; in *Pho.* iambic dialogue form is employed throughout. *Pha.* (like the non-Senecan *Octavia*) opens with an anapaestic monody. The opening speech/ song is delivered by a major character in *Tro.*, *Pho.*, *Med.*, and *Oed.*; by a ghost in *Ag.* and *Thy.*; by a deity in *HF. Medea* is unique among Senecan plays in having its major figure occupy its entire first act. Medea dominates Act I, as she will dominate the play (see Introd., xciv–xcv). The four other Senecan tragedies where the monologue (or monody) of a character occupies the first act either involve a supernatural character (ghost: *Ag.*; deity: *HF*) or a second- ary human figure (Hecuba: *Tro.*; Hippolytus: *Pha.*). In the non- Senecan *Hercules Oetaeus*, however, as in *Medea*, a monologue by the play's major figure (Hercules) constitutes its opening act.

Medea's long soliloquy begins in prayer with an invocation of Olympian and infernal gods, culminating in hell's master and mis- tress (1–12). There follows an address to the Furies, who are asked to fulfil two curses: death for the Corinthian royal family, life, want, and exile for Jason (13–26). After a cry of frustration, Medea criticizes the inaction of her grandfather, the Sun, and requests his chariot so that she may destroy Corinth with flames (26–36). The final part of the speech continues the focus on revenge, as Medea exhorts herself to exact vengeance during the impending wedding ceremony, and resolves to surpass as well as match her earlier crimes (37–55). Worthy of note is how the prologue's movement from divine invoca- tion to the articulation of revenge is accompanied by an increasing turbulence of language and structure (cf. the prologues of *Hercules Furens* and *Troades*, and see below) and Medea's evolving theatrical- ization, even mythologization, of herself, as she moves from sorceress and betrayed wife and mother (1–26) through granddaughter of the Sun (26–36), to avenging Fury and demon of the Caucasus (37–48), whose post-partum *scelera* will dwarf her virgin crimes (48–55).

Entrance monologue soliloquies and asides of a 'character-defining' kind are a feature of Senecan tragedy and an index of its concern with psychological interiority: see e.g. 179–87 (Creon), 431–46 (Jason); cf. *HF*332ff., *Tro.* 1ff., *Pha.* 835ff., *Oed.* 1ff., *Ag.* 226ff., *Thy.* 404ff., 491ff., 885ff.; see also the entrance monody of Octavia at Oct. 1–33 and the entrance monologue of 'Seneca' at Oct. 377–434. Frequently, as here, such entrance monologues present a fusion of emotional chaos

and rational analysis typical of Senecan soliloquies and reminiscent of Ovid's *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses*; note at 41 the regular Senecan apostrophe to the character's mind or 'soul' (*anime*; see Comm. *ad loc.*). Seneca's entrance monologues are also often used to establish dramatic authority. Senecan tragedy revels in strong female figures, but none is on a par with Medea, who here at the start of the play establishes (or rather re-establishes) her authority and standing. This is no common abandoned woman, heartbroken at her desertion, but one who is pre- pared to unleash the forces of hell and heaven, ungender herself, and (paradoxically) use her maternity to gain recompense for broken *fides.*

Medea's opening soliloquy, however, is not simply a 'prologo interiore' (Németi *ad loc.*); it has obvious expository function. In *Troades* and *Oedipus* the soliloquies of the prologue outline in some detail the fictive situation of each play. *Medea's* prologue is more subtle in its expository role. Even as it plunges the audience *in medias res*, into the rage, love, hatred, and suffering of Medea, it articulates the dramatic moment (Jason's divorce of Medea and impending remarriage) by allusion and implication. In Euripides' prologue, which Ennius adapted (see Boyle 2006: 72–3), the Nurse leisurely outlines the circumstances of the dramatic action and specifically states that the new wedding of Jason and the daughter of Creon has already occurred (Eur. *Med.* 17–19). In Seneca's prologue it gradually becomes clear that the new wedding has not taken place but is imminent (27–8, 37–9). The focus of Medea on her status as wife (1–2, 16–17, 23, 52–3) thus has particular force. The wedding procession which follows Act I is both anticipated and framed.

The theatrical power of Medea's speech is noteworthy and owes much to its declamatory structure and its initial prayer-form. The opening twelve-line invocation (1–12) leads to two curses couched in a plethora of imperatives and jussive subjunctives (13–26). Biting rhetorical questions, futures of resolve, and imperatives follow (26–36), culminating in an expression of rage for vengeance articulated through first person futures, self-injunctions, plain indicatives, jussive subjunctives, and a climactic gerundive (37–55). Passion and emotional force are constant throughout, expressed through pronounced alliterative patterning (see e.g. on 1–12, 13–15, 19–26, 37–9, 48–50), ritualistic repetitions (*tu...tu, quosque...quosque, nunc, nunc, adeste, letum...letumque, similes...similesque,*

parta…parta…peperi, da, da, quo…quo, scelere…scelere), internal climaxes (12, 18, 25–6, 35–6), and asyndeton (20–1, 45–6), and made the more impressive through the use of short indicative statements (12, 25–6, 48–9, 54), bitter irony (11–12, 28–31, 37–8, 52–55), and telling verbal play (25–6, 28–9, 39–40, 55). Medea's fierce rhetoric realizes not only the 'speakability' of the iambic verse-form—it was, according to Aristotle, the 'most speakable' of the metres (see Introd., cxlii)—but also its aggressive, violent potential (see on 849–78). Note also proleptic markers in the teasing references to children and to Medea's parturition (23–6, 50, 55), as if the impulse to filicide lies just below the surface. Euripides' prologue had analogous proleptic markers, voiced by the Nurse (Eur. *Med.* 90–3), but here they also index a more 'knowing', post-Euripidean, post-Ennian, post-Ovidian Medea, conscious of her literary history and the script which she replays. See Introd., cvii–cix.

Medea's opening invocation influenced subsequent dramatists and librettists: e.g. Hosidius Geta (*Med.* 1 ff.), Dolce (*Marianna*, I. i), Shakespeare (*Macbeth*, I. v), Corneille (*Méd.* I. iii), Cicognini (Cavalli's *Il Giasone*, I. xv), Longepierre (*Méd.* II. i, IV. ii), Haym (Handel's *Teseo* III. v and IV. iv), Glover (*Med.* I. vii), Hoffmann (Cherubini's *Méd.* II. i, III. i, ii).

Metre: iambic trimeters. See Introd. IX.

The time is late afternoon: see on 71–4 below.

MEDEA, *alone onstage, stands before the altar:* Cicero (*Fam.* 7.6.1) describes Ennius' Medea as wearing layers of gypsum plaster on her hands (*manibus gypsatissimis*)—presumably for the purpose of whitening the actor's skin. Although it is unclear whether the phrase is Cicero's or Ennius', the orator may well be referring to a republican tradition of a white-handed, white-armed Medea. Since Seneca's play is preoccupied with creating a Medea who self-consciously realizes her dramatic and literary pedigree, he may well have chosen to imitate such a tradition.

The scene is Corinth: a public space before two buildings in the background, the royal palace of CREON *and the house of* MEDEA. *Upstage is an altar:* see 'Scene' above. The attempt of Ahl (1986), 43, to set this scene inside Medea's house reduces its thematic power and has no foundation in the text.

1–12. Although several extant ancient tragedies open with a prayer or the invocation of a deity (the *Phoenissae* of Euripides and, it seems, that of Accius start with an address to the Sun, *Hercules Oetaeus* with one to Jupiter; each play in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* begins with a prayer), this is the only Senecan play to do so. Invocations of, and prayers to, the gods, however, feature strongly in Senecan tragedy—often, as here, with potent dramatic effect: see e.g. 595 ff. and 740 ff. below, *HF* 516 ff., 592 ff., 900 ff., 1063 ff., 1202 ff., *Oed.* 247 ff., 403 ff., 1046, *Pha.* 54 ff., 406 ff., 671 ff., 945 ff., 1159 ff., 1201 ff., *Ag.* 310 ff., 802 ff., *Thy.* 122 ff., 1006 ff., 1068 ff. This long invocation of deities relevant to Medea's situation (1–2, 7–8), Medea's family line (5), her magical powers (6–7, 9–11)—establishes the cosmic and dramatic authority of the play's dominant figure, who prays to gods both Olympian and infernal. Seneca is clearly aware of Dido's prayer for vengeance at Virg. *Aen.* 4.607–29, where Sol, Juno, Hecate, the Furies, and the 'gods of dying Elissa' (*di morientis Elissae*) are similarly invoked. For Dido/Medea, see on 434–9. Note the rhetorical effect of a strong alliterative patterning in this section, especially of *d*, *c*, and *t* in 1–5.

Medea identifies herself explicitly through self-naming at 7–8. Seneca's speaker-identification strategies vary. Obviously costume and mask frequently play a determinant role, but Seneca is especially fond of self-naming, as here—a device used in Greek tragedy and also to be found in the opening speeches of *Tro.*, *Ag.*, and *Thy.*, where Hecuba (*Tro.* 36), Thyestes (*Ag.* 4) and Tantalus (*Thy.* 3) self-name. (Contrast *HF* 1 and *Oed.* 12, where Seneca identifies the speakers, Juno and Oedipus, through a family relationship; cf. *Pha.* 91–2, *Ag.* 121–4.) For self-naming, see on 164–7. For character identification in Seneca, see on 177–8.

Note the possible (and potentially most effective) use of the vertical structure of the Roman stone theatre. If the play had been performed in one of Rome's permanent theatres, the opening references to Jupiter, Juno, Lucina, Minerva, Neptune, the sun god, Hecate, and then infernal gods, accompanied by appropriate gestures from the actor, would have made immediate, dramatic use of the verticality of the theatrical space. (The *cauea* of the Theatre of Marcellus, for example, rose to a height of c.32 metres: Sear 2006: 135.) Seneca's *Medea* points regularly to the verticality of the

cosmos—from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell—enabling actors to incorporate the whole theatrical space into the play's action: see on 670–848. Sometimes the action itself is realized through and by means of the vertical space in which it is played: see on 879–1027.

1–4. Seneca regularly has characters invoke deities through defining descriptions rather than their names (e.g. 56–70 below, *HF* 205, 597–600, 903–4, *Pha.* 960–3, *Ag.* 802–4). Often characterized as exemplifying the allusive style of a *poeta doctus*, it is a form of invocation as old as Homer (see e.g. *Il.* 3.278–80). Sometimes Seneca combines defining descriptions with the names: *Pha.* 54–80, 406–23, *Oed.* 403–7, *Ag.* 805–7. Here he does both.

Di coniugales/Gods of wedlock: commentators nominate Jupiter, Juno (*sacris praefecta maritis*, 'guardian of marriage rites', Ov. *Her.* 12.87) and Hymenaeus, with possibly Venus (as at Eur. *Phaethon* 229–30 Collard and Cropp), though other minor deities are sometimes denoted by this phrase, which is used again by Seneca in the final exchange between Atreus and his brother in *Thyestes* (1103). See also Tac. *Germ.* 18.3. Note that *Di*, 'Gods', as well as being the play's first word, is also its last (*deos*, 'gods', 1027). Cf. Longepierre's *Médée*, who invokes *De la loi conjugale augustes protecteurs* (*Méd.* II. i. 280), picking up also the *custos* of line 2. Note that, of the *di coniugales* here, Juno *qua* Hera is a supporter of Jason in Apollonius' epic (see e.g. 2.216–17, 3.210–14, 4.784–8, 1151–2), in which (3.1–110) she persuades Aphrodite to engineer (through Eros) Medea's falling in love with Jason. For the chiastic arrangement of adjectives and nouns in this line (AabB), see on *profundi…*below.

tuque/And thou: throughout the translation I have used the archaic second person singular and plural ('ye') in divine invocation and prayer, familiar to us from the King James Bible and the English-language Christian liturgy of (most of) the twentieth century; see e.g. 2, 4, 67, 69, 71, 73, 90.

genialis tori, Lucina, custos/Lucina, guard Of the marriage bed: Diana, with whom Lucina, indeed Juno Lucina, was identified by Catullus in his hymn to Diana, Poem 34.13–16:

Tu Lucina dolentibus
Iuno dicta puerperis,
tu potens Triuia et notho es
dicta lumine Luna.

Thou art called Juno Lucina
By women in labour;
Thou art called great Trivia
And Luna of spurious light.

Lucina (probably etymologically 'she who brings into the light, *lux*' (see Donatus ad Ter. *Andr.* 473), although a connection with *Luna*, the 'moon', and *lucere*, 'shine', was argued by the ancients: Cic. *ND* 2.68, Varro *LL* 5.69, Isid. 3.71.2) was the goddess of childbirth (Ter. *Andr.* 473, *Adel.* 487, Ov. *Fas.* 2.449–52), with which Diana had always been associated, as is clear from votive offerings found at Aricia, her most famous shrine (see Fordyce ad Cat. 34). Her identification with Diana is frequent after Catullus and is found in Virgil (*Ecl.* 4.10), Horace (*CS* 15; cf. *Odes* 3.22.2–3), Martial (*Epig.* 15.4–5 Shackleton Bailey), and Statius (*Silu.* 1.2.268–9). It was spurred by Diana's identification with the Greek goddess Artemis, who had herself appropriated the function of the birth goddess Eileithyia/ Ilithyia. Horace (*CS* 17–20) specifically associates Lucina/Diana with the protection of wedlock. Like Artemis, Diana was identified with the moon and with Hecate (see on 5–7). Lucina is mentioned in this play's opening choral ode at 61, where her separation from the 'Thunderers' (*Tonantibus*, 59), like that from the *di coniugales* here, seems to preclude any identification with Juno herself, as Costa ad 2 proposes. Varro (*LL* 5.50) reports a shrine to Iuno Lucina on the Cispian Hill in Rome; see also Ov. *Fas.* 3.245–8. Note at *Her.* 12.87–8 the appeal to Diana (as well as Juno: see below) to bear witness to Jason's marriage proposal.

Festus (83.23L) writes that the 'marriage bed' was called *genialis* because it was dedicated to the Genius (protective deity) of the husband (*in honore genii*). For *torus* later in the play, see 285, 1003.

quaeque…docuisti/thou who taught: Minerva (Greek Pallas Athena), who assisted in the building of the Argo (Apollon. 1.18–19, 3.340, Ov. *Tr.* 3.9.7) and taught the Argonauts the art of navigation. See further on 364–8. Seneca is fond of combining relative pronouns with the enclitic *-que*, see e.g. 7, 8, 23, 57, 144, 231.

domituram freta: the *lectio difficilior* of A (*domitorem fretis*; cf. 4).

Tiphyn/Tiphys: the name of the helmsman of the Argo (Apollon. 1.103ff., Virg. *Ecl.* 4.34, Ov. *Her.* 6.48, *Ars* 1.6), mentioned also at 318, 346, 617; he was credited by the elder Pliny (*HN* 7.209) with the invention of the tiller. At 595–6 below it is Jason who is credited with 'subduing/taming the sea' (*mare qui subegit*). Tiphys is a Greek accusative.

nouam...ratem/first ship: lit. 'new/novel ship'; cf. Ovid's description of the Argo as *noua puppis*, 'a new ship' (*Her.* 12.13, 16.347; see also Prop. 3.32.14). A regular conceit of the Argonautic narrative in the Roman tradition is that of Argo as the first ship: e.g. Cat. 64.11, Ov. *Am.*1.15.21 (on Varro's *Argonautae*), 2.11.1–6, *Met.* 6.721, 8.302, *Tr.* 3.9.7–8, Manil. 1.412–13, Luc. 3.193–7, 6.400–1, VF 1.1, 5.472, Stat. *Theb.* 5.335–7, Mart. *Epig.* 7.19.2, 11.1.12. Hence the choral odes below at 301ff., 665. Phaedrus ridicules this conceit at *Fab.* 4.7.17–20. The choral odes also present the corollary of the invention of navigation: the end of the Golden Age—a topos of Roman verse (see on 329–34). Any mention of the 'first ship' always and inevitably bore some negative meaning. The elder Pliny cites four claimants to be the first sailor, including Jason (*HN* 7.207). The Argonauts themselves, of course, encounter other peoples, such as the Colchians, who have the best ship, although some peoples have never seen a ship before (4.319–22).

frenare/To rein: the metaphoric phrase, *frenare ratem*, is Manilian (4.23). For the image of the 'rein' or 'bridle'; see also 103 (and note *ad loc.*), 348 (and note *ad loc.*), 592, 792, 866.

et tu/And thou: see above.

profundi saeue dominator maris/deep ocean's brutal lord: Neptune, brother of Jupiter and Dis, across whose 'second realm' (see on 595–8) the Argo sailed. There is a certain audacity in Medea's invocation of Neptune, a protector of the city of Corinth, where a great panhellenic sanctuary to him (Poseidon) had been built at Isthmia (ten miles east of the city) in pre-archaic times. From the early sixth century the sanctuary had traditionally been the site of the Isthmian Games and had been restored (mid first century BCE) after the Roman sack of the city in 146 BCE. *Dominator*, though a rare word in Latin, occurs four times elsewhere in Senecan tragedy: *HF* 1181, *Pha.* 1039, 1159, *Thy.* 1078; cf. esp. *Pha.* 1159, where almost the exact

phrase is found (*profundi saeue dominator freti*). The portentous quality of *dominator* seems to have appealed to the dramatist, who clearly liked nouns ending in *-tor*: see on 266–71 below and Fitch *ad HF* 1181. Note how the alliterative and semiotic play with *dominituram* (2) hints at what will be proclaimed by the Chorus as the Argo's hubristic and transgressive breach of nature's order (301–39, 597–8, 605–6). For similar wordplay, see on 56–8.

Observe the arrangement here, common in Senecan tragedy, of two adjectives and two nouns in chiastic order: abBA; cf. e.g. 15, 533, 722, 736 below, *Pha.* 113, 305, *HF* 367, *Ag.* 54, *Thy.* 113. Other kinds of interlocking, chiastic arrangement are also found: e.g. aABb at 10, 23a22b, 431, 608, 686, 710; AabB at 1, 287, 1002, *Pha.* 908; aBbA at 5, 725, 741, 761, 891, 903, *Pha.* 308; aBbA at 110, 112, 467; aBAb at 600, 685, 689; AbaB at 613, 793, 820; ABba at 101, 713, 1011; AbBa at 769. In the notations employed in this Commentary—abBA, etc.—A and B represent nouns, a and b their corresponding adjectives. Not all instances of chiastic word-order will be noted. For the parallel arrangement of adjectives and nouns, also common in Senecan tragedy, see on 5–7 below.

5–7. clarum...diuidens orbi diem/slices the world's bright day: lit. 'dividing bright day for the world'; distributing sunlight to the world. *Clarum diem* occurs again at 298 below, rounding off the first two acts. See on 296–9; cf. also *HF* 821, *Tro.* 756. Note how Seneca frames the line with an adjective and substantive in agreement—a framing device used regularly in Senecan tragedy and in Latin verse; cf. e.g. below 15, 34, 46, 103, 104, 107, 109.

Titan: the sun god, one of the main deities of the play, prominent here at the beginning (28–36) as he is (presumably: see on 1022–5) at the play's end. 'Titan' is technically 'Hyperion', the sun's pre-Olympian father (Hes. *Th.* 371–4), with whom in the Latin tradition Titan is sometimes identified (Ov. *Met.* 8.565). But the name 'Titan' is commonly used for the sun god, Sol/Apollo, in Roman poetry (e.g. Ovid in *Met.*) and in Seneca's tragedies (Seneca uses it as often as Phoebus and prefers it to Sol). As the sun god (Helios/Sol/Phoebus), Titan (via Perseis) father of Aeetes and grandfather of Medea (Hes. *Th.* 956–62; see 28–9, 210, 512 below). In art the sun god is generally imaged with rays of light emanating from his head (*radiis frontem*

uallatus acutis, 'crowned with a palisade of pointed rays', Ov. *Her.* 4.159; cf. 'Titan radiate', *radiate Titan*, at Sen. *Pha.* 678 and *HO* 1518; also Oct. 3). The image appealed to Nero, who in his later years (perhaps from 64 CE onwards) had himself depicted on his coins with radiate crown (Mattingly 1923: 'Nero' 191–5, 197–8, 200–6, 208–10, 213–24, etc., Plates 43 and 44). Notoriously, he had intended to erect a colossal gilded bronze statue of himself as the sun god, with rays of light spurting from his head, in the vestibule of his Golden House (Plin. *HN* 34.45, Suet. *Nero* 31.1).

tacitisque praebens conscium sacris iubar/gleaming witness Of silent rites: Hecate (see next note) is 'gleaming' because she is the moon; the rites are 'silent' because they are enacted' (Hor. *Epod.* 5.51–2). For *sacra tacita* elsewhere, see Pha. 107, Tro. 843; cf. *HF* 300–2. *Tacitis...sacris* is an ambivalent dative: dative after *praebens* but also after *conscium*, as at Pha. 107 (*tacitis conscias sacris*); cf. Tib. 1.7.48, Ov. *Met.* 7.194. *Iubar* is most often used of morning light (see e.g. Oed. 2), though Seneca extends its use to the light of the setting sun (e.g. Ag. 463) and, as here, to that of the moon—see Tarrant *ad* Ag. 463. Note the parallel arrangement of adjectives and nouns (abAB), as e.g. at 30, 178, 179, 531, 649, 680, 718, 753, 940, 973: cf. other parallel arrangements, e.g. AaBb at 226, 241, 511, 648, 928; aAbB at 261, 411, 468, 471, 733, 779, 931, 1026. Not all instances of parallel word-order will be noted. For chiastic arrangements of adjectives and nouns see on 1–4 above.

Hecate triformis/triformed Hecate: Hecate, daughter of Perses and Asteria (Hes. *Th.* 409–12), was a primitive goddess of both the Greek and Roman religious traditions, who was especially associated with magical powers and witchcraft. She manifested herself in all three 'realms' of the world: the heavens, where in the Roman tradition she is Luna, the moon; earth, where she is Diana (and therefore Lucina: see on 1–4); and the underworld, where she is Hecate. She thus possessed three forms (hence her defining epithets, *triformis/terge-mina/triplex*, 'triformed', or *triceps*, 'three-headed': see also Pha. 412, Hor. *Odes* 3.22.4, Virg. *Aen.* 4.511, Ov. *Her.* 12.79, *Met.* 7.94, 194, Auson. *GTN* 18) and had universal power. Frequently represented with three bodies or three heads/faces, she was regularly worshipped

at crossroads in Italy as Trivia or 'goddess of three ways' (see 787 below, *Ag.* 367, Oct. 977, Cat. 34.15, Virg. *Aen.* 6.13, 35, Ov. *Fas.* 1.141–2, 389, *Pont.* 3.2.71). Longepierre calls her *triple Hécate* (*Méd.* IV. i. 879). See *PGM* 4.2526–30 for a prayer to Selene/Artemis (= Luna/Diana) focusing on her triple nature:

Tri-sounding, tri-voiced, tri-headed Selene,
Tri-pointed, tri-faced, tri-necked and tri-wayed,
Who hold untiring flame-fire in triple baskets,
Who frequent the triple way and rule triple decades
Decades with triple forms and flames and dogs.

(trans. after Betz 1992)

Hecate's name appears in curse-tablets and spells throughout the Greek and Roman worlds. The close association of Medea with Hecate is found in the ancient literary tradition from Euripides (*Med.* 395–7) to Ovid (*Her.* 12.168, *Met.* 7.74, 194–5) and beyond (VF 7.352–4, 520–1). Apollonius makes her a priestess of the goddess (Arg. 3.252). Medea's invocation of Hecate at 740–842 is one of the dramatic 'high-spots' of this play.

7–9. *quosque iurauit mihi deos Iason quosque Medeae*/gods by whom Jason Swore oaths to me and whom Medea: Ovid specifies Juno and Diana in *Her.* 12 (83–8) and Hecate and the Sun in *Met.* 7 (94–7) as the gods by whom Jason swore that he would marry Medea and remain faithful. Apollonius (4. 95–8; cf. 4.358–9) has Jason swear his intention to marry Medea by Zeus and Hera. In Diodorus Siculus (4.46.4) the oath, as in Ovid, is of marriage and lifelong partnership. Euripides (*Med.* 20–3, 161–3, 168–70, 492–5) simply mentions 'oaths' sworn before the gods; Valerius (7.498–9) has Jason swear his oath by Medea herself and the stars she controls. The 'gods' more suitable to Medea (line 8) are those of the underworld because of their appropriateness to her 'infernal' magic practices. For the simple accusative with *iurare*, cf. HF 712. Note Medea's use of Jason's name (see on 447–50) and her self-naming (see on 164–7). For modes of character identification, see on 177–8.

fas/Rightly: *fas*, 'that which is right or permissible by divine law' (*OLD* 1), 'that which is morally right or proper' (*OLD* 3), a central term in Roman moral and religious discourse, is used both appro-priately and ironically by Medea of her 'right' to address the dark

forces of the underworld. Her nature and situation turn the normal-ities of life on their head. Senecan tragedy revels in moral convolu-tion: see Medea later at 904–5, or Atreus at *Thy.* 220: *fas est in illo quidquid in fratre est nefas*, 'Wrong in respect of a brother is right in respect of him'. Note, too, here the verbal play: *fas* was derived by the ancients from *fari*, 'to speak' (see Maltby 1991: 223), and so is semiotically appropriate for Medea's 'right to speak' to the gods of the underworld.

9–12. *noctis aeternae chaos*/chaos of eternal night: cf. *HF* 610, where the phrase recurs. *Chaos* in Latin, the primordial, formless state of things (*deforme chaos*, *Thy.* 832), was used regularly, as here, of the underworld. It occurs frequently in the Senecan tragic *corpus*: e.g. *HF* 677, *Tro.* 400, *Pha.*1238, *Ag.* 487, *Oed.* 572, *Oct.* 391, *HO* 1134. It is invoked again by Medea at 741 below, as by Theseus at *Pha.* 1238. Cf. Virg. *Aen.* 4.510–11 (Dido's priestess invoking Erebus, Chaos, and Hecate), 6.265, Ov. *Met.* 10.30, Luc. 1.74, 5.634. Chaos is a Hesiodic divinity (*Th.* 116), and as a divinity is invoked, like Hecate, in the Greek magical papyri (*PGM* iv. 443, 1459). For *nox aeterna/perpetua*, 'eternal night', used elsewhere by Seneca of the underworld, see e.g. *Pha.* 221, 835, *Oed.* 393. See also 464 below.

auersa superis regna manesque impios/Kingdoms hated on high, unholy ghosts: lit. 'Kingdoms turned away from/hostile to those above'; *superi*, 'those above', seems intentionally ambiguous, embra-cing both those in heaven (gods) and those on earth (humans)—hence 'on high'. A Roman audience might have found *manes impios* oxymoronic, as Hine *ad loc.* notes, given the ancient belief that *manes* originally meant *boni*, 'the good' (see Maltby 1991: 364, *manes* a.). For the motif of *pietas*, see on 258–61; for the line's chiastic word-order, see on 1–4.

Although a trisyllabic cretic word (*impios*) concludes line 10, the line is not in breach of 'Porson's law' (see on 126–9 below), since the fifth-foot caesura disappears through synaloephe (elision): see Raven (1965), 54. Synaloephe also prevents such a breach at 22, 25, 29, 43, 45, 47, 119, 134, 137, 138, and elsewhere in *Medea*. Seneca clearly saw 'elision as a device for unifying the elements of the last dipody' of the iambic trimeter: Fantham (1982), 106. For actual breaches of 'Porson's law' and the latter's applicability to Seneca metrics, see on 126–9 (line 127).

dominumque regni tristis et dominam/That grim realm's master and its mistress: the reference is to Dis or Pluto, brother of Jupiter and Neptune and ruler of the 'third realm', the underworld, and to his wife Proserpina, daughter of Ceres and Jupiter, whom Dis snatched from Sicily in the upper world to be his wife in the world below: see the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* and Ov. *Fas.* 4.419–618. Ovid's Medea similarly invokes 'the king of the dead with his raped wife' (*umbrarum . . . rapta cum coniuge regem*, *Met.* 7.249) before the rejuvenation of Jason's father, Aeson. *Tristis*, 'grim', 'gloomy', 'tearful', is the quintessential epithet of the underworld, the *regna tristia* (Hor. *Odes* 3.4.46); see also 631, 680, 804 below, *HF* 566, 620, *Oed.* 545, *HO* 1065.

fide meliore raptam/raped In better faith: the ablative is one of manner, a sociative-instrumental function of the case: see Woodcock §43.5. The phrase is used again at *Tro.* 728 (of the young Priam). The strong translation of *raptam* as 'raped' (its meaning ranges from 'carried off' or 'seized' to 'raped') seems justified by this context. The juxtaposition with *fide meliore* seems deliberately paradoxical. Dis' more 'faithful' rape was due to the fact that he had remained a faithful husband. Unlike Proserpina, however, Medea had willingly accompanied her husband-to-be, indeed had betrayed her own family to save him. For the rape motif, see on 607–15, 982–6.

In this indirect way Medea introduces the concept of *fides*, 'trust', 'fidelity', 'loyalty', 'faith', 'commitment'—the promises one person solemnly makes to another. A recurrent motif of Roman amatory poetry (e.g. Prop. 1.12.8, 18.18, Ov. *Am.* 1.3.6, 13, 16), *fides* is to be given a moral, social, legal, even ontological force in the action of *Medea*: see 145, 164, 221, 248, 306, 434–7, 1003—and on 335–9, 570–4, 579–669 (introd.). For *fides* as the unbreakable bond between husband and wife, see Megara on her relationship to the absent Hercules (*HF* 420–1): *non uincet fidem | uis ulla nostram*, 'No vio-lence will vanquish our commitment'. For *fides* broken by one's (ex-) lover, see e.g. Cat. 64. 132 (Ariadne), Virg. *Aen.* 4.336, 373, 597–9 (Dido), Ov. *Her.* 12.19, 72, 210 (Medea). *Fides*, like *pietas* (see on 258–61), was not only a cardinal Roman value (frequently professed, if less frequently displayed) but a goddess in her own right. *Fides Publica* or *Fides Publica Populi Romani*. A shrine to her was associated with Numa, the second king of Rome (Livy 1.21.3–4, DH

2.75.3), and a temple was dedicated to her in the middle of the third century CE and restored some 200 years later. This temple was situated on the Capitol within the Area Capitolina next to the great temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus; in its vicinity were placed the texts (on bronze tablets) of various treaties and laws: see Richardson (1992), 151. Horace calls her *incorrupta*, 'uncorrupted', and the 'sister of Justice' (*Iustitiae soror*), *Odes* 1.24.6–7; to Cicero she is *fundamentum …iustitiae*, the 'bedrock of justice' (*Off.* 1.23). At *De Ira* 2.28.2 Seneca groups the imperatives of *fides* with those of *pietas, humanitas, liberalitas*, and *iustitia*. For moral/legal language and motifs in the play, see on 318–28.

uoce non fausta precor/hear my ill-omened prayer: lit. 'I pray with voice not of good omen.' A striking climax to Medea's twelve-line opening sentence, in which the conventions of ancient prayer (one spoke only words of good omen) are deliberately inverted as a reflection of Medea's own inverted social and religious position (respected wife protected by religious vows now abandoned) and of her recourse to the deities of the underworld. Being 'well-omened' in one's speech at religious ceremonies—*fauere linguis*—was to be silent (see on 56–8 below), which is what Medea resolutely is not in this play, despite all attempts to silence her. The implied inversion of *fauete linguis* is underscored both by litotic understatement and by the known etymological connection of *faustus* and *fauere* (see Maltby 1991: 226), observed by Hine *ad loc*. For the use of *non* to negate an adjective, as often in Senecan tragedy, see e.g. 915 below, *Pha.* 237 (*non casta*), 274 (*non mitti*), 994 (*non imparatum*), *HF* 470 (*non uirilem*), *Tro.* 82 (*non indociles*), 404 (*non facili*), 408 (*non nata*), *Oed.* 367 (*non…capax*), 385 (*non timida*), 448 (*non uile*). *Voce non fausta* is ablative of means/instrument: see Woodcock §43.1.

13–26. Invocation of the Furies to exact Medea's vengeance against the Corinthian royal house and Jason. Cf. Apollonius' Medea at 4.385–7, where the curse is limited to Jason. There is other literary precedent, esp. Ariadne's invocation of the Furies at Cat. 64.192–201 (cf. also Dido at Virg. *Aen.* 4.610). Allusions to Horace's Canidia (see on 13–15; cf. on 5–7) underscore Medea as witch. For Dido/Medea, see on 434–9.

13–15. *Nunc, nunc, adeste*/Come now, now: intertextual reciprocity seems to be at work here. Medea echoes the words of Horace's witch Canidia, invoking *Nox* ('Night') and Diana (*Epod.* 5.53). Canidia alludes to Medea in her invocation (*Epod.* 5.61–6) and Medea here repays the allusion. Hughes' Senecan imitation continues the intertextual play: 'Come, spitefull fiends, come heapes of furies fell, I Not one by one, but all at once' (*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, I. ii. 39–40). So, too, Shakespeare (Lady Macbeth): 'Come, you Spirits I That tend on mortal thoughts…' (*Macbeth*, I. v. 40–1). See also *HF* 498–9, where Megara invokes the bloodstained Danaids: *nunc, nunc… adeste*, 'Come now, now'—and Ariadne's call to the Furies at Cat. 64.195: *huc, huc, aduentate*, 'Come here, here.'

Duplication of *nunc* in the initial foot occurs only twice elsewhere in Seneca: *Tro.* 107, *HF* 498 (cited above)—but see also *HO* 550, 1880. Duplication (*geminatio*), however, often at the beginning of a line of verse, is a regular feature of Seneca's tragic style: e.g. *iam, iam, Oed.* 28, 668, *Tro.* 1141, *Pha.* 926, *Med.* 692, 949, 982, *Ag.* 44, 1011; *me, me, HF* 110, *Tro.* 680, *Pha.* 1159; *te, te, Oed.* 642, 1042, *Pha.* 663, 888; *tu, tu, Oed.* 249; *ille, ille, Oed.* 106, *Tro.* 721; *hic, hic, Pha.* 1268; *hunc, hunc, Thy.* 101, *Oed.* 1038; *hac, hac, Pha.* 9, 83; *hoc, hoc, HF* 99, *Thy.* 916; *has, has, Tro.* 739; *huc, huc, Pha.* 1247, *Med.* 980; *sic, sic, HF* 1218, *Med.* 90, *Thy.* 102; *ibo, ibo, Pho.* 12, 407; *da, da, Med.* 32; *ite, ite, Med.* 845, *Tro.* 191, 627, 1165; *duc, duc, Tro.* 993, *iuuat, iuuat, Med.* 911; cf. also *Oct.* 23, *HO* 87, 550, 753, 846, 1880. Repetition, it should be noted, is a feature of prayer and other ritual language, including magical incantation.

Ades and *adeste* (lit. 'be present') are the standard terms in Roman prayer and in Senecan tragedy for the invocation of deities: e.g. Ov. *Fas.* 1.67, 69 (Janus), 3.2 (Mars), Sen. *Oed.* 257 (several gods), 405 (Bacchus), *Pha.* 54, 412, 423 (Diana), *Ag.* 340 (Juno)—see also below *adeste* (16), *adsint* (58), *ades* (67), *adsit* (699), *ades* (703), *adesse* (770). According to Tarrant (*ad Ag.* 348), the formula (equivalent to Greek ἐλθέ, ἱκοῦ, μόλε, or προφάνητε) is 'made necessary by the local character of pagan gods'.

sceleris ultrices deae/vengeful goddesses of crime: the Erinyes, Eumenides, or Furies, spirits of the underworld who avenged bloodshed, inflicted terror, and carried out curses, and who sometimes functioned as the curses themselves (hence they were called *Arai* or

Dirae): Ariadne invokes them as *Eumenides* at Cat. 64.193, Dido as *Dirae ultrices* at Virg. *Aen.* 4.610. Often regarded as the daughters of Night (see esp. Virg. *Aen.* 12.845–52), they were also regularly portrayed as three in number—Megaera, Tisiphone (see Virg. *Geo.* 3.552 quoted above), and Allecto—and were sometimes referred to simply as the 'sisters', *sorores*; *HF* 110, *Oed.* 161, *Ag.* 759. However, the language used at 958–60 (see note *ad loc.*) and elsewhere in Senecan tragedy may suggest a larger group. There is perhaps some irony in Medea's summoning of the Furies, since one of their original functions was the punishment of bloodshed within the family. Hence Octavia calls upon these same goddesses—*deas scelerum ultrices*—at *Oct.* 965, as does Oromasdes in Alabaster's late sixteenth-century *Roxana* (line 1495). Later in *Medea* (958–71) they will appear (or be seen by Medea as appearing) to avenge Medea's murder of her brother. Reference to them elsewhere in Senecan tragedy is not infrequent: e.g. *Oed.* 160–1, 590, 644–5, *HF* 86–8, 100–12, 982–4, *Ag.* 83–4, *Thy.* 250–2. A Fury is a *dramatis persona* in Act I of *Thyestes*, participating in dialogue with Tantalus' Ghost, and Furies probably appear onstage towards the end of Juno's prologue in *Hercules Furens* (see Fitch *ad HF* 86ff.). *Sceleris* is objective genitive after *ultrices*; see Woodcock §72.1.

***crinem solutis squalidae serpentibus*/With your filthy hair of writhing snakes**: lit. 'filthy as to your hair with loosened snakes'; cf. Ariadne's Furies, who have a brow 'bound with snaky hair', *anguino redimita capillo* (Cat. 64.193). Snake-hair and torches (*facem*, 15) are regularly associated with the Furies. Indeed, torches (cf. e.g. 962 below, *HF* 100–1, 983–4, *Oed.* 161, *Ag.* 761, Ov. *Met.* 10.350), together with whips and snakes (*HF* 101, 982, Virg. *Aen.* 6.570–2), including snake-whips (see on 958–62), were the traditional weapons of the Furies, and are attested in Roman tragedy as early as Ennius' *Alcmeo* (frag. xv, 27 Jocelyn). See also Seneca's description of anger, *ira*, as a Fury at *Ira* 2.35.5. *Crinem* is accusative 'of respect' after *squalidae* to denote 'that in respect of which the adjective is applied' (Woodcock §19.1). The use of the construction (adjective plus accusative of respect) for parts of the body seems to occur first in Virgil (*Aen.* 5.97, 12.65), and is common thereafter in Latin verse, especially where the adjective is a perfect passive participle (e.g. Ov. *Met.* 7.183, Sen. *Oed.* 403–4, 438–9, 443, and 801

below); it is found, too, in Augustan and imperial prose (Livy 21.7.10, Tac. *Ger.* 17). It seems to have come into Latin under the influence of Greek (Woodcock §19). See further on 801–5. Note the alliterative use of *s* in this line.

***atram...facem*/black torches**: lit. 'black torch'. For torches carried by the Furies, see above. For the chiastic word-order, see on 1–4.

16–17. *adeste*: see on 13–15.

***thalamis...meis*/my bride-chamber**: for the Furies as *pronubae* or 'bride-attendants' at an ill-omened wedding, see the Ovidian Hypsipyle's description of her ill-fated marriage to Jason: *tristis Erinys / praetulit infaustas sanguinolenta faces*, 'a grim Fury / Stained with blood held ill-omened torches' (Ov. *Her.* 6.45–6). See also Ov. *Her.* 2.117–20, 7.96, *Met.* 6.430–1, Luc. 8.90, *Oct.* 23–4, *Med.* 262–6. Cf. Sen. *Tro.* 1133, where Helen is the ill-omened *pronuba*. Correr was much impressed by the idea of the Fury-*pronuba*: *in thalamis meis / cruenta Erynnis crine uipereo stetit*, 'A bloody, snake-haired Fury stood in my bride-chamber' (*Progne* 478–9). Tony Harrison has Creusa's own attendants turn into Furies and apply their wedding torches, 'now funeral brands', to Creusa: *Medea: A Sex-War Opera* (1985), Act II.

***quales stetisti*/as you once did**: lit. 'just as you stood'; Medea appeals to the Furies' past behaviour in a perverted version of the common prayer formula: 'as you helped me in the past, so help me now.' The Furies were present at Medea's wedding as avengers of the murdered Absyrtus (see on 129–36). Medea is asking the Furies to turn the vengeance they sought from her onto her present enemies. The Furies and Absyrtus will reappear (at least to Medea) in the final act (958–71). Note the hyperbaton caused by postponement of the relative, as often in Senecan tragedy; see e.g. 63, 79, 205, 223, 287, 380, 382, 450, 479, 497, 596, 647, 691, 726, 748, 772, 844, 882, 937, 957. For the postponement of conjunctions, see on 93–8.

17–18. First curse: death to the royal family. Cf. Ariadne's climactic curse: *funestet seque suosque*, 'death to himself and his kin' (Cat. 64.201).

***coniugi...socero*/wife...father-in-law**: Creusa and Creon respectively. *Coniunx*, 'wife', is the term Medea most often uses of Creusa (see also 125, 279, 999—at 278–9 it is modified by *noua*, 'new', as

here), always with emotional charge; it is elsewhere used by Medea—generally with sharp irony—of herself (22a, 418, 501, 928, 1021) and, qua 'husband', of Jason (746). Paelex, 'mistress/whore', is used once of Creusa by Medea (920) and twice of herself (462, 495). Socer, 'father-in-law', occurs seven times in the play (18, 106, 522, 538, 546, 746, 999); gener, 'son-in-law', occurs five times (184, 240, 255, 421, 460). The Greek equivalents are absent from Euripides' Medea (unless one construes κηδεμών, 'guardian', as a surrogate for κηδεστής, 'son-in-law', at 990). It seems part of Seneca's strategy to emphasize Medea's social isolation by underscoring the new, secondary kin-relationships from which she is excluded.

letum...letum...date/Bring death...Death: the normal idiom is leto dare plus accusative of person (to be) killed, attested in republican drama and in Latin verse and prose: see also HF 1048, Pha. 695, Pho. 579. Seneca's variation here occurs nowhere else in the tragedies (but see HO 976). The use of a periphrasis of noun plus verb (rather than simply a verb, i.e. 'kill', perimere, etc.) suits Seneca's tragic manner, which is renowned for its so-called dictio nominis, 'noun style' (Smereka (1936)), i.e. the use of nouns and periphrases involving nouns rather than simply verbs to articulate meaning; see e.g. 25, 30, 38, 49–54. It is noticeable that the tragedies evidence a much higher proportion of nouns to verbs than do the prose works (where a dictio uerbi, 'verb style' may be found).

regiae stirpi/royal line: this need not imply that Creon has children other than Creusa. Hine notes ad loc. that a scholiast on Eur. Med. 19 refers to a son and Hyg. Fab. 25 an elder daughter; but neither are mentioned in this play.

19–23. I join Costa, Chaumartin, and Németi in retaining the MSS reading of line 19, which has been much emended. Est is to be supplied with mihi. The peius/malum wordplay seems to me typically Senecan. Zwierlein (1986a) replaces mihi with Axelson's conjecture, num, and punctuates with question-marks after aliquid and malum; in later editions Zwierlein retains the same punctuation but (like Hine) accepts Bentley's replacement of mihi with est.

19–26. Second curse: life (in exile and want) for Jason. Note the rhetorical force of the alliteration of p which permeates this passage, climaxing in peperi (26).

peius aliquid quod precer...malum/a greater curse still: lit. 'a worse evil which I may pray for.' The motif of the enlargement or intensification of evil/crime/sin (malum/scelus/crimen/nefas) is common in Senecan tragedy: see e.g. 50, 362, 394, 674, 902–10 below, Tro. 45, 427, Pho. 269, 272, 286, 457, 531, Pha. 142–3, 688, 697, Oed. 17–18, 828, Ag. 29, 124, Thy. 4–6, 192–5, 249–80, 745. See also Atreus' maius malum at Acc. Atr. frag. iii, 200–1 Klotz. For the thesis that the enlargement of evil theme may have its starting-point in Ovid's Medea, reflected in Heroides 12 (esp. 212)—nescio quid certe mens mea maius agit, 'Something greater, for sure, plays in my mind'—see Hinds (forthcoming), sect. 3.

uiuat/Life: lit. 'let him live'. The thought that life is often a more severe penalty than death is regularly voiced in Senecan tragedy—by the tyrant-figure: see Lycus at HF 511–13, Aegisthus at Ag. 996, Atreus at Thy. 246–8. The thought is not simply a theatrical one: Suetonius Tib. 61.5, where it is attributed to the emperor Tiberius, and NQ 4a Pref. 17, where it is attributed by Seneca to Caligula. Cf. uiuat later at 140–1, where it is not used as punishment; also 596, where it is used of Jason by the Chorus. See also Ovid's Medea in a different context: Met. 7.24. For the curse of life uttered by a modern Medea see Enoch's Black Medea (2000), sect. IV, pp. 77–8. Note the force here of the paradoxical climax, a regular Senecan strategy: see e.g. HF 1259–61, Pho. 313–19, Thy. 290–4. Here the dramatic and rhetorical power is increased by the climax coming early in a new line, which then stops—also a regular Senecan mannerism; cf. e.g. peperi at 26, fulsi, 218, fatebor, 237, nec das, 460, is fecit, 501, timemur, 565, metuenda, 738, diduci, 939, intentat, 961, Megaera, 963, feci, 991 (all the above from Medea's speeches)—also doris, 882, fraterna, HF 52, uiuamus, HF 1317 and Tro. 476, falli, Tro. 937, speculare, Pha. 679, perimatur, Oed. 16, nascuntur, Thy. 314, pater est, Thy. 330, certos Thy. 1102, uinci, Pho. 492, regnabit, Pho. 646, ascribo, Pho. 653. For Seneca's use of climactic half-lines for such theatrical effect, see on 123–6.

uiuat...erret...expetat...optet: jussive/hortatory subjunctives; see Woodcock §109.

ignotus egens/unknown...Needy: the echo of the Virgilian Aeneas' description of his own exile (ignotus egens, 'unknown, needy', Aen. 1.384) seems patent.

egens exul pauens inuisus/Needy, exiled, afraid, hated: cf. *Ag.* 991–2, *inops egens . . . exul inuisa*, 'Helpless, needy . . . exiled, hated', applied by Aegisthus to Electra. Asyndetic lists of adjectives, nouns, and verbs are found frequently in both Senecan tragedy (see e.g. 45, 123, 207–8, 390, 395, 679 below, *HF* 32, 1260, *Tro.* 578, *Pha.* 34, 223, 264–5, *Pha.* 923, 939, *Oed.* 13, *Ag.* 45, 112, *Thy.* 216) and the early republican tragedians: see e.g. the list at Acc. *Med. s. Arg.*, frag. x, 405 Klotz: *exul inter hostis exspes desertus uagus*, 'exiled among foes, hopeless, helpless, deserted, wandering'—also Enn. *Alex.* frag. xvii, 40 Jocelyn, *Med. Ex.* frag. 9, 6 Boyle (2006), Pac. *Atal.* frag. vii, 52 Klotz, *Per.* frag. xx, 301 Klotz, Acc. *Eur.* frag. x, 349 Klotz. Asyndetic writing is a feature of Roman literature from its inception: Livius, *Od.* frag. 27 Blänsdorf, *uestis pulla purpurea ampla*, 'a robe dark, purple, wide'; Naevius, *BP* frag. 37 Blänsdorf: *urit uastat populatur, rem hostium concinnat*, 'burns, wastes, ravages, the enemies' affairs disrupts.' For Greek precedents, see Fitch *ad HF* 32—to which I add Eur. *Hec.* 810–11 (re exile). Euripides' Medea has just two adjectives in asyndeton when describing her statelessness (*Med.* 255). For the curse of exile, cf. Medea's curse on Jason at Apollon. 4.385–7, Hypsipyle's on Medea at Ov. *Her.* 6.162 (*erret inops exspes, caede cruenta sua*, 'May she wander helpless, hopeless, bloodied by her murders'), and Ovid's on Ibis at *Ib.* 113 (*exul inops erres alienaque limina lustres*, 'May you wander exiled, helpless, and haunt other men's doors'). For similar asyndeton in a modern adaptation, see the description of Jason by Jeffers' Medea as 'helpless, friendless, mateless, childless' in the finale to his play (*Med.* Act II, p. 80).

incerti laris/homeless: lit. 'of uncertain/unfixed abode'; *laris* is genitive of description or quality: see Woodcock §§84–5. *Lar*, a household tutelary god and protector of boundaries (hence also a god of crossroads), is used frequently in Senecan tragedy in the sense of *domus*, 'home', 'abode', esp. a place of shelter, while retaining some of its sacral associations: see also 224, 478 below.

notus hospes/known alien: an oxymoron to underscore the paradox of the position she wishes for Jason—and one which Medea presently occupies as the 'known other'. Cf. *infaustus hospes*, 'cursed alien' (*Oed.* 80), used by Oedipus of himself.

limen alienum/other men's doors: cf. Ovid's curse on Ibis (*Ib.* 113—cited above).

In line with most recent editors (e.g. Costa, Zwierlein, Hine, Fitch, Németi, Giardina 2007—but not Viansino 1965 and 1993, Chaumartin, or Giardina 1966). I have accepted here Leo's transposition of the first hemistichs (22a, 23a) of lines 22–3. I also join with recent editors in the rejection of Axelson's unnecessary emendation in 22a (*opto* for *optet*), printed by Zwierlein (for discussion see Fitch 2004*b*: 79). The trisyllabic ending of line 22 (23a, 22b) does not result in a breach of 'Porson's law' because the synaloephe removes the fifth-foot caesura (see on 9–12 above).

23–6. The alliteration of *p* (see on 19–26) intensifies in 24–6.

me coniugem optet/Let him long for me as wife: so Apollonius' Medea (4.383–4), 'May you, exhausted by your sufferings, remember me (μνήσαιο . . . ἐμεῖο)'; cf. also Virg. *Aen.* 4.383–4. For *coniunx*, see on 17–18 above.

quoque: quo is an ablative of comparison, 'an off-shoot of the "from"-case or true ablative': Woodcock §§78–9. For the relative pronoun and enclitic, see on 1–4.

similes patri similesque matri/like their father, Like their mother: 'would have little point if Creusa were meant (as Costa suggests). Medea hypothesizes that Jason will be so desperate that he will even long for children as evil as Jason and Medea. For the phrase cf. Ovid's Medea (*Her.* 12.189: *nimium similes tibi*, 'too like you') and Procne (*Met.* 6.621–2: *quam es similis patri*, 'how like your father you are').

parta iam, parta ultio est: peperi/It's born now—vengeance—vengeance—born: I've given birth: Medea's alliterative interjection breaks into the formal rhetoric to index a sudden and potentially startling thought. To the audience Medea's parturition language (cf. *parta, parturit*) anticipates Medea's filicidal intent (*Her.* 12.208: *ingentis parturit ira minas*, 'my anger gives birth to monstrous threats'), signals the filicide to come (see on 1–55, introd.). Cf. Anouilh's similar use of imagery of pregnancy and parturition in the opening scene of his *Médée*: 'je suis grosse ce soir…J'ai quelque chose à mettre au monde encore cette nuit'; also Butler's Demea: 'I am growing big with it [revenge]. It will be a painful birth', Demea, sc. iv. Enoch's Medea is faithful to the Senecan text: 'My revenge is born,

already born, for I have given birth' (Black Medea, sect. IV, p. 78). Note that the Senecan Medea's words are opaque as to her present intentions. In Euripides' play (Med. 792–3) Medea does not clearly formulate her plan to kill the children until after confronting Jason. In Seneca filicidal clarity comes even later and is left to the final act (924–5; see also on 549–50), where peperi will be repeated (957) with undisguised murderous intent. However, though opaque, the Senecan Medea's language seems clearly a deliberate tease, product of a self-conscious Medea, aware of her literary pedigree. Vltio occurs only here and at 896 below in the tragedies. For the dramatic emphasis given to peperi, see on 19–23 (utinat).

For repetition separated by a single word, see also faciet hic faciet, 423, fiat hoc fiat, Thy. 265. See also geminatio at 13–15. Note the double elision at the end of line 25; cf. HF 952, Tro. 909, 911, Pha.358, 435, Oed. 834, 865, Ag. 924, Pho. 629, Thy. 718 (also HO 882, 940), where, as here, the second elision is prodelision.

26–36. Medea questions herself and her grandfather, the Sun, whose chariot she requests for the implementation of her vengeance. The association of cosmic imagery with Medea will continue throughout the play: see on 164–7.

26–8. sero/sown: deliberate semantic ambiguity. Does sero here mean 'sew' or 'sow'? Both. The normal idiom colloquia/uerba serere, 'to sew together conversations/words', i.e. speak, is given added semantic charge by the preceding peperi, 'I've given birth', and the ensuing sator, 'progenitor', lit. 'sower', so as to generate the additional sense of 'sow/plant/inseminate' (for 'sowing discord'; etc. see OLD 4). 'Sown' at least aurally preserves the wordplay. See Németi ad loc.

non ibo in hostes/My foes unfought: military imagery, following the masculinizing sero, 'sown' (26). Cf. Ovid's Medea at Her. 12.155 (cited below), 182. For military imagery used by Medea, see on 51–4, 675–9, 907–10; also 424, 516–28. See also Euripides' Medea 1242. For further masculinization, see on 42–3. For ire in, see also 593–4.

manibus excutiam faces/I'll strike torches from hands: Medea refers to the pine torches carried in a (Roman) wedding procession (see 38, 111 below). Medea's words indicate that the wedding of Jason and Creusa has not taken place and anticipate the procession which will shortly erupt onto the stage. In Euripides the wedding takes place

before the play's action begins. See on 1–55 (introd.). Seneca's Medea has been reading her Ovidian letter to Jason: cf. Her. 12.155–6:

ire animus mediae suadebat in agmina turbae,
sertaque compositis demere rapta comis.

My mind drove me to rush into the moving crowd
And snatch the garlands from their groomed hair.

Note Medea's future of resolve: excutiam, 'I'll strike'. Her speeches in the play will be peppered with these, reflective of her 'sense of agency': see Walsh (2012), 88–9.

caeloque lucem/Light from heaven: presumably (given what follows) the light of the sun, which she later (768) claims to have been able to control—a solar eclipse being the appropriate Senecan response to human evil (Pha. 678–9, Thy. 776ff.), especially to that perpetrated on the Sun's own granddaughter. As a witch, Medea could drag down the moon (Ov. Met. 7.207–9).

Manibus and caelo are datives (originally of 'disadvantage') common with verbs of 'depriving' in Latin verse and imperial prose: see Woodcock §61.

28–31. spectat…spectatur/view…is viewed: this play on active and passive verbal forms (see also 218–19 below) is an instance of the rhetorical figure declinatio. See e.g. timet…timetur ('fears…is feared', HF 726–7), flet…fletur ('weeps…is wept', Tro. 1099–1100), non uideo…sed uideor ('I do not see…but am seen', Pho. 9–10), premo premorque ('I crush and am crushed', Thy. 1050–1). See Cic. De Or. 3.207, Quint. Inst. 9.3.42. Behind the verbal play is the traditional representation of the Sun from Homer (Il. 3.277) onwards as 'all-seeing'; in Ovid (Met. 4.228) the sun is the mundi oculus, 'the eye of the world'. There is a more important point. Spectare, 'to view' or 'to watch', is the technical term for 'theatrical viewing' (see e.g. Cic. De Orat. 1.18)—spectatores being the Latin term for a theatrical 'audience' (see on 991–4 below). Here Sol, the Sun, is envisaged as audience and actor, as both viewing and as the object of others' gaze (for the conceit, see Ov. Ars 1.99). Metatheatrical language abounds in Senecan tragedy and is evident throughout this play: see on 42–3, 48–50, 51–4, 164–7, 170–1, 296–9, 394, 396, 420–5, 562–7, 734–7, 843–4, 893–4, 907–10, 911–15, 976–7,

978–81, 982–6, 991–4, 999–1001, 1019–22. For human life as *specta-culum* in Seneca's prose works, see Introd., xxiii.

nostri sator Sol generis/the Sun, our progenitor: the sun god was father of Aeetes, Medea's own father; see 'Dramatis Personae' (*Medea*) above.

insidens/seated: for 'sitting' in a chariot elsewhere in Sen., cf. *Oed.* 424 (Bacchus). Here Medea seems also to imply *desidens*, 'inactive', 'idle'.

per solita puri spatia...poli/the pure sky's customary plains: *spatia* is not used by Ovid and is used by Virgil only sparsely, but it occurs some eighteen times in Senecan tragedy at the service of his 'noun style' (see on 17–18). The word appears again in the penulti-mate line of the play, where it echoes this line; see on 1026–7.

remetitur diem/retrace the day: cf. *Thy.* 789–884, where an entire choral ode is devoted to the Sun's disappearance in response to human wickedness. Hippolytus' appeal to the Sun to disappear in outrage at the wickedness of his granddaughter, Phaedra (*Pha.* 677–9), defines one of the great theatrical moments of Senecan tragedy:

> tuque, sidereum caput,
> radiate Titan, tu nefas stirpis tuae
> speculare? lucem merge et in tenebras fuge.
>
> Thou, too, lord of stars,
> Titan radiate, see thy daughter's sin.
> Submerge thy light and flee into the dark.

Appeals for, and expectations of, cosmic disruption in response to injustice and evil punctuate Senecan drama: see e.g. 531ff. below, *HF* 1202ff. (Hercules), *Pha.* 954–8 (Theseus), *Oed.* 1028–31 (Jocasta), *Thy.* 1077ff. (Thyestes); cf. also *Oct.* 245–51 (Octavia), *HO* 847–55 (Deianira). The appeals imply something like the Stoic doctrine of cosmic 'sympathy' (συμπάθεια), the interconnectedness of all things (attributed to Chrysippus: von Arnim 2.473, 475, 532, 912).

32–6. Medea's request to borrow the chariot of the Sun recalls the disastrous request of the Sun's own offspring, Phaethon, who suc-ceeded in torching the universe and himself: see on 599–602 below. Medea, however, will succeed in setting fire to Corinth without injury to herself (878–90) and will leave in her serpent-drawn chariot unharmed (1022–7). In this and other respects, the play's prologue

anticipates its final act in a manner common to other Senecan plays (*Phaedra, Agamemnon, Thyestes*). It is worth noting that Nero's charioteering (Suet. *Nero* 53) was sometimes proclaimed to be equal to that of the sun god, with whom he sought to be associated (see on 5–7).

Costa *ad loc.* cites Corneille's (*Méd.* I. iii/iv. 261–4) and Long-epierre's (*Méd.* II. i. 283–94) powerful adaptations of these lines. Glover interestingly repositions Medea's incendiary desire at the end of his play (*Méd.* V. ii. 3–8):

> Now to complete my vengeance will I mount
> The burning chariot of my bright forefather;
> The rapid steeds o'er Corinth will I drive,
> And with the scatter'd lightnings from their manes
> Consume its walls, its battlements and tow'rs,
> Its princes, people, palaces and temples.

da, da/Let, let: cf. *HO* 87. For the *geminatio*, see on 13–15.

per auras curribus patris uehi/ride my ancestral chariot On the winds: the line is echoed in Medea's last line in the play (1025).

ignifera...iuga/fiery team: cf. Phoebus' 'flaming chariot' (*curru... flammifero*) at *HF* 593. Seneca shows a fondness for compounds in -*fer*; see in *Medea* alone: *sceptriferis*, 59, *armifera*, 468, *squamifera*, 685, *mortifera*, 688, *mortifero*, 717, *gemmifer*, 725, *mortifera*, 731, *lucifera*, 842, *armiferi*, 980. The fondness was shared by Lucan and the Flavian epicists. *Ignifer* was also used by Ovid of the chariot of the Sun (*Met.* 2.59). See further Fitch (1987a), 469–70.

gemino...litore/with its double shore: the Isthmus of Corinth and its double shore or two seas are often alluded to in Latin poetry and in Senecan tragedy: see e.g. Ov. *Her.* 12.104, Sen. *HF* 336, 1164–5, *Oed.* 266–7, *Ag.* 562–5, *Thy.* 111–14, 124–5, 181–2, 628–9, *HO* 82–4. The city itself is regularly described as *bimaris*, 'of two seas' (*Oed.* 282, Hor. *Odes* 1.7.2, Ov. *Her.* 12.27, *Met.* 5.407). Along with Costa and Németi I accept Gronovius' emendation, *litore*, of EA's *litori*. The resulting instrumental ablative removes the awkwardness of having *litori* as dative of indirect object. For further discussion, see Németi *ad loc.*

Corinthos...opponens moras/Tardy Corinth: lit. 'opposing delays'—to shipping (because of its isthmus). The Greek form

Corinthos found in E is preferred here; so, too, *Isthmos* (45), *Alpheos* (81), *Iolcon* (457).

maria committat duo/confound two seas: with the Corinthian Isthmus destroyed the Ionian and Aegean seas would be joined. Several abortive attempts were made in the ancient world to unite the two seas with a canal, including attempts by Caligula and Nero (Plin. *HN* 4.10, Suet. *Nero* 19.2). The Isthmus kept the seas separate until the completion of the Corinthian canal in 1893. *Committit* is jussive/hortatory subjunctive.

37–55. The final section of the soliloquy is a spectacle of passion and self-exhortation, as Medea commands herself to enact appropriate vengeance. With this self-conscious exhortation to evil, cf. *Ag*. 114–24, where Clytemnestra urges herself to evil, choosing as her paradigms Helen and Medea. Self-conscious exhortation (but not to evil) was a common rhetorical strategy of Senecan Stoicism: see on 40–2.

37–9. Medea returns to the imminent wedding, in which she imagines herself turning the rituals to a deadly end.

Hoc restat unum/One thing remains: the formula is reused at 498–9, and for variations see *HF* 380, *Oed*. 1033, Ov. *Met*. 2.471. Cf. Seneca's use of *hoc derat unum*; see on 991–4.

pronubam...pinum/bride-torch: technically, the pine torch carried by the *pronuba*, chief bridal attendant, into the wedding chamber. Medea sees herself as a Fury-like *pronuba* at this ill-omened wedding (see on 16–17). For pine as the material of the torches carried in a Roman wedding procession, see 111 below, Cat. 61.15, Ov. *Fas*. 2.558; for pine as the material of the torches of the Furies, see *HF* 100–1.

thalamo: dative of 'goal of motion'; see Woodcock §§57–8.

feram ut...caedam/I should bear...Butcher: postponed *ut* introducing a consecutive noun-clause in apposition to *hoc*, as at 498–9: see Woodcock §168.

postque sacrificas preces/and after sacrificial prayers: for other contracted expressions with *post*, see 50, 637 below. Cf. *post Troiam*, *Tro*. 744, *post matrem*, *Pho*. 50, *post laceros Pentheos artus*, *Oed*. 442, *post Pompeium*, *Ira* 3.30.5, *post Catilinam*, *Ben*. 5.17.2. For Seneca's 'noun style', see on 17–18.

caedam...uictimas/Butcher the beasts: lit. 'slay the victims'. Animal sacrifice was a regular constituent of a Roman wedding (see Treggiari 1991: 164). Here Medea perverts the wedding sacrifice to one which features other 'beasts/victims', presumably the bride and her father (perhaps also the groom, if Medea's passion is making her renege on her *uiuat*, 20), as the beasts to be sacrificed. Hine *ad loc*. wishes to extend *uictimas* to include Medea's children. Senecan tragedy often conflates sacrifice, murder, wedding, and funeral: e.g. *HF* 920–4, *Pha*. 708–9, *Tro*. 195–202, 287–90, 361–5, 1132–64, *Ag*. 158–68, *Thy*. 682–95. For *uictima* used of a human 'victim', see 970 below, *HF* 922, 1038, *Tro*. 140, *Thy*. 146, 688; specifically of a human 'sacrificed' at a wedding, see *Tro*. 306 (Polyxena), *Oct*. 146 (Silanus), 662 (Octavia), *HO* 348 (Deianira). At *HF* 899 (*caesis...uictimis*) and *Thy*. 545 (*destinatas uictimas*), there is a similar ambiguity over animal/human victim as here in *Medea*; but, whereas Medea and Atreus are fully aware of the ambiguity and exploit it, Hercules is not so cognizant. For sacrificial imagery later in the play, see on 40–2, 59–66, 62–6, 299–300, 562–7, 575–8, 806–11, 902–7, 967–71, 976–7, 1002–5, 1019–22. The return of sacrificial imagery is especially evident in the final act: see on 967–71.

For *caedere* of sacrificial slaying, see *Tro*. 140, *HF* 877, 899, 1037, *Thy*. 1058, Virg. *Geo*. 3.23, 4.547. For the topos of wedding/funeral in Greek tragedy, see Rehm (1994). For a recent exploitation of the topos, see Tony Harrison, *Medea: A Sex-War Opera* (1985), Act II (Medea): 'I'll turn their wedding hymn into a *dirge*. | I'll *smother* the torches in the smoke of death, | and change their joy-chants to a dismal *droné*—' and further on 16–17 above. Note how *uictimas* begins an alliterative pattern of consonantal *us*, climaxing in *uirgo*, 49.

40–2. *per uiscera ipsa*/In their guts: the perversion of the ritual continues, the 'guts', *uiscera*, being those of Medea's sacrificial victims (see above), here envisaged as being examined for appropriate signs in accordance with the ritual of *extispicium* (though in this case the mere handling of the *uiscera* would itself be 'punishment'). Editors often cite δι᾽ ἥπατος, 'through the liver', at Eur. *Med*. 40, where, however, the owner(s) of the liver is unclear (Mastronarde *ad loc*.). *Viscera* is a wide-ranging term and is sometimes used of the womb (*Oct*. 638, *HO* 1805) or even 'children' (see *Ag*. 27, Ov. *Her*. 11.118,

Rem. 59, Met. 6.651, 8.478, 10.465—and Fitch, 2004b:80), and there may be a latent meaning here signalling the infanticide to come.

supplicio/to punishment: dative of 'end aimed at'; see Woodcock §67.

anime/my soul: the apostrophe of the soul or mind, animus, as ingredient, even marker, of a soliloquy seems to occur in Roman tragedy as early as Pacuvius' Periboea (frag. viii, 284 Klotz: see Boyle 2006: 99–100). A Latin adaptation of 'the Greek use of θυμε, καρδία, or ψυχή' (Tarrant ad Ag. 108f.), it is also found in Roman lyric and elegy (Cat. 63.61, Prop. 2.10.11) and was an occasional device of the declaimers (Sen. Rhet. Con. 2.3.1, Quint. 9.2.91). Its frequent use in Senecan tragedy is not only to index soliloquies and asides but to suggest mental struggle or resolution, being most frequently employed at moments of self-exhortation, as here and at 976 below (cf. Pha. 592, 599, Tro. 613, 662, Ag. 192, Thy. 192, 270), or self-rebuke, as at 895, 937, 988 below (cf. Pha. 112, 719, Ag. 108, 228, 915, Oed. 933, 952, 1024, Thy. 283, 324, 423—also HO 842, 1828). Like the various apostrophes of dolor ('pain/grief'), amor ('love'), ira ('anger'), furor ('fury'), pudor ('shame'), pectus ('heart'), uirtus ('valour'), and manus ('hand') (see on 137–40), the widespread use of the anime formula is a marker of the psychological interiority of Senecan drama. (Anime is never used by Seneca to betoken affectionate address to another.) Behind it lies the Stoic theory of voluntary action as the product of the mind's assent to a psychological impression or impetus (Ira 2.1.3–5, 2.2.2, 2.3.4–5, Ep. 16.6, 74.31): see on 895–8 and Introd. V. Although the anime formula is used in the prose works only once (Cato's fictive suicide 'soliloquy' at Utica: Prov. 2.10), the rhetorical strategies of self-examination, self-exhortation, and self-rebuke are ubiquitous (see e.g. Ira 3.36). Some associate the frequency of the anime formula in the tragedies with the application of the Stoic virtue of constantia to the passions: Star (2006) and (2012), 62–83. For Medea's use of Stoic language and rhetorical strategies, see Introd, civ–cxvi and on 176. Seneca's use of the anime formula had a substantial influence on Renaissance tragedy, in which dramatists such as Correr, Giraldi, Shakespeare, Marston, Corneille, and Racine are clearly indebted to the self-questioning and self-addressing monologue of Seneca: see Boyle (1997), 156–7.

quid antiqui…uigoris/your old power: uigoris is partitive genitive with a neuter pronoun, here quid—a common construction: see Woodcock §77.ii.

42–3. pelle femineos metus/Banish female fears: not as strong as its most famous dramatic progeny, viz. Lady Macbeth's 'unsex me here…' (Macbeth, I. v. 41), but implying the same gender inversion. Virtus, i.e. courage, was necessarily a defining property of a uir, a man. Hence Horace's courageous Cleopatra acts in an 'unwomanly fashion' (nec muliebriter, Odes 1.37.22), Ovid's Lucretia is a 'matron of male spirit' (animi matrona uirilis, Fas. 2.847), and Statius' Argia displays 'unfemale courage/masculinity' (non feminea uirtus, Theb. 12.177). For masculinizing imagery, see on 26–8; for uirtus and transgendering, see further on 159–63, 976–7.

inhospitalem Caucasum/inhospitable Caucasus: this formidable mountain range between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea was renowned for its wild terrain (HF 1208–10, Virg. Aen. 4.366–7, Serv. ad Virg. Geo. 2.440). Bordering on Colchis, it is part of Medea's home landscape (see Phasis and Pontus below). Horace gives it the modifier inhospitalis (Epod. 1.12, Odes 1.22.6), which Seneca repeats here and at Thy. 1048. Note the force of inhospitalis here. The Latin adjective is a translation of the Greek ἄξενος, 'hostile to strangers/foreigners'. It is precisely because Corinth has rejected the 'foreigner' Medea, that Medea will now herself be inhospitalis to Corinth. And, since Caucasus was the location of the punishment of the first technological hero/villain, Prometheus, there may also be a suggestion of Medea's adoption of an appropriate psychological state for the punishment of the more recent technological criminal, the Argonaut Jason. For other allusions to Prometheus/Caucasus, see on 301–8, 329–34, 705–9, 820–32.

mente indue/dress your mind: to 'dress/clothe the mind' with a harsh mountain range makes for a baroque, hyperbolic metaphor. The theatrical language—used even in the prose works by Seneca: indue dissimilem animo tuo uultum, 'Put on an expression opposite to your feeling', Polyb. 5.5, hanc personam induisti, 'You took on this role/put on this mask', Ben. 2.17.2—here contributes to the play's metatheatrical dimension: see on 28–31. Mente is probably instrumental rather than (with Costa ad loc.) locatival ablative, since

induere regularly takes either the accusative or the dative of the object clothed: lit. 'with your mind put on the inhospitable Caucasus', 44–5. An overt statement of a major theme of Senecan drama and especially of *Medea*: the repetition of the past, *semper idem*.

Phasis: chief river of Colchis and traditional marker of the far east. See also 102, 211, 451, 762 below.

Pontus: the Black Sea, at the eastern end of which was the kingdom of Colchis. See also 212, 231, 454 below.

nefas/evil: 'the unspeakable'; major moral/religious transgression, used in Senecan tragedy of such crimes as patricide and incest (*Oed.* 18, 661, *Pha.* 128, *Ag.* 31, 35), fratricide (*Pho.* 412, *Med.* 131), and filicide (*Thy.* 1006, *Med.* 931). It is used four times in the play (not a large number given its proliferation in Senecan tragedy), and its cognate adjective *nefandus* is used twice.

Isthmos/Isthmus: metonymic for Corinth.

45–8. On the asyndeton in 45–6, see on 19–23.

uagum furnus per artus/death Limb by limb: lit. 'death wandering through limbs.' Some see a reference here to Medea's murder of her brother (see 125, 131–3).

48–50. *Leuia memoraui nimis, haec uirgo feci*/My list is too trivial; These were my virgin deeds: for similar trivialization of past crimes, see 906–9, where again they are relegated to Medea's 'girlhood' (*puellaris furor*, 909). See also Juno, trivializing her past sufferings (*HF* 63): *leuia sed nimium queror*, 'But my complaints are too trivial'; so, too, Andromache (*Tro.* 411): *leuia perpessae sumus*, 'Our past sufferings are trivial'. Seneca is fond of using *leuis* for rhetorical intensification (*amplificatio*; Quint. *Inst.* 8.4.19); see Medea at 155, 901 below, Oedipus at *Oed.* 954–5 and *Pho.* 270, Jocasta at *Pho.* 367–9, the Fury at *Thy.* 47. *Virgo* is the more usual term for a young woman in Senecan tragedy (*puella*—a diminutive with the emotional and political associations of English 'girl'; see Watson 1985: 433–4—is used only four times). The issue of 'virginity', however, is prominent in this play and *uirgo* is an important thematic term in that regard, recurring at 87, 105, 131, 238, 350, 984, 1007; also *uirgineus* at 75, *uirginitas* at 984.

Note the shortening of the final *o* of *uirgo* as at 350. See also *aliquando*, 190, *redeo*, 197, *cerno*, 396, *cedo*, 518, *credo*, 884, *nescio*, 917, *dedo*, 1005. The tendency to shorten long final *o* is a feature of imperial Latin verse. Seneca's practice in this matter accelerates, as Fitch (1981), 303–5, observes, in *Thyestes* and *Phoenissae*, which Fitch regards as the final plays of the Senecan eight. The practice in *Medea* is on a par with the other five plays. See Introd., xix.

nimis: note the postponement of *nimis*; hyperbaton and postpone-ment of adverbs of quantity such as *nimis* and *nimium* are not uncommon in Senecan tragedy: see 301, 326, 919, 1011.

grauior exurgat dolor/Let heavier pain surge: *dolor*, 'pain/grief/anguish', is obviously a common term in Senecan tragedy (some 64 occurrences), but especially common in *Medea* because of its perme-ating focus on the protagonist's psychological state (14 occurrences, 11 of which are used by Medea of herself). *Grauior*, 'heavier', implies more than 'greater'; it contrasts with *uirgo* (49) and anticipates *partus* (lit. 'parturition,' 50) to suggest also pregnancy: Medea is heavy, i.e. pregnant, with pain, which will give birth to vengeance. Note the reification of emotion here, common to all Seneca's plays, in which *dolor, furor, ira, amor, pudor, libido*, etc. function as the subject of both intransitive and transitive verbs: e.g. *HF* 28, *Tro.* 282–5, *Pha.* 595, *Thy.* 552, *Pho.* 299—and 155–6, 392, 406, 445, 868–9, 927, 938–9, etc. below. Emotions are often addressed (139, 916, 930, etc. below—see on 40–2) in scenes of dramatic intensity as if they are ontologically independent of the speaker: see Introd., cvi. This ontologization of the emotions was not new: e.g. Dido addresses *pudor* at Virg. *Aen.* 4.27; *dolor* makes Medea kill her children at Ov. *Tr.* 2.387–8, *Rem.* 59–60. But both the frequency and the range seem to have been new. *Dolor* itself is apostrophized by Medea five times in the play, including four times in the final act (914, 944, 1016, 1019—also 139–40); it is clearly a major motor of the Senecan Medea's infanti-cidal vendetta. *Exurgat* is jussive/hortatory subjunctive.

maiora ... me scelera ... decent/Greater crimes become me: char-acters in Senecan tragedy frequently appeal to 'probity', what 'becomes' or 'is fitting' (*decet*): see e.g. 175, 281 below, *HF* 409–10, 990, *Tro.* 332, 336, 1003, *Pha.* 216, 453, 610, 618, 803, *Oed.* 1003, *Ag.* 52, 124, *Thy.* 86, also *Oct.* 440, 454. The appeal to *quod decet* is common too in Seneca's prose works: e.g. *Ep.* 85.26: *cautio illum*

decet, timor non decet, 'Caution becomes him, fear does not become him'. For *decere* used, as here, of personal and/or theatrical identity, see *Tro.* 1003, *Ag.* 52, 124, *Oed.* 1003; for metatheatrical language, see on 28–31; for the motif of the enlargement of evil, see on 19–23.

Maiora may well have evoked recollection of the *maius* of the final line of Ovid's *Heroides* 12 (212, cited on 19–23). If so, its contrast with the 'trivialities', *lenia*, of Medea's past may have suggested a generic contrast between elegiac and tragic Medea: see Trinacty (2007). For echoes of the ending of *Her.* 12, see on 23–6.

post partus/as a mother: lit. 'after giving birth.' Strong irony: beneath the surface meaning of Medea's maternity/maturity lies once more a hint (to the audience) of the filicide to come. The phrase begins an alliteration of *ps*, culminating in the climactic birth image, *post partus* (55). For the contracted expression after *post*, see on 37–9.

51–4. *accingere ira*/Arm yourself with wrath: *accingere* (lit. 'be girded/gird yourself'—a so-called 'middle' use of the passive) was used by Ovid's Medea to spur herself to action (*Met.* 7.47) and may be modelled on the Euripidean Medea's ὁπλίζου (*Med.* 1242). It also occurs in Terence (*Ph.* 318) and Livy (1.47.4, 2.12.10). Often found with *ferro* ('with the sword'), it is part of a pattern of military imagery in Seneca's play associated with Medea (see on 26–8).

Ira ('wrath', 'anger')—better construed here as instrumental abla-tive (so most editors) rather than as vocative (Viansino 1993)—is a major motor of action in Senecan tragedy, and an important motif of this play. In *De Ira* Seneca defines *ira* as an emotion directly related to vengeance: *concitatio animi ad ultionem uoluntate et iudicio pergentis*, 'a disturbance of the mind proceeding to revenge by choice and judgment' (*Ira* 2.3.5): see Introd. V. Out of 70 instances of the word *ira* in Senecan tragedy, just over 30 per cent (22) occur in *Medea*. Braden (1985) describes *ira* as the emotion which drives Seneca's characters to assert their 'autarkic selfhood.' Atreus enters *Thyestes* describing himself as *iratus* Atreus (*Thy.* 180); Medea fore-shadows the destruction she will wreak by proclaiming that 'I have as

yet committed no crime—in anger (*irata*)', *Med.* 135–6. Indeed, it is commonplace for Senecan tragic figures to acknowledge their own 'wrath': see e.g. Oedipus (*Oed.* 519, *Pho.* 352), Juno (*HF* 27–8, 34, 75), Clytemnestra (*Ag.* 142, 970). Medea mentions her own *ira* thirteen times: 51, 136, 203, 414, 556, 902, 916, 927, 938, 943, 944, 953, 989. In the prose works *ira* is often, as in the tragedies, an index of the tyrant (*Ira* 3.18–19: Catiline, Caligula, Cambyses, Cyrus). In the non-Senecan Octavia it is Nero's *ira* which is most often men-tioned. For Seneca's interest in the pathology of anger, see *De Ira* and Introd. V. In the tragedies *ira* is often an other-destructive rather than a self-destructive force: in *Troades, Medea* and *Thyestes, ira* triumphs in a world de-civilized.

furore toto/full frenzy: the intensifying use of *totus* (lit. 'whole') is common in Seneca; see below 143, 239, 326, 353, 446, 531, 629, 886, 928. For *furor*, see on 391–6; for a possible metaliterary/metapoetic resonance, see next note.

narrentur tua repudia/The tale of your divorce: *repudium* was the precise legal term (Gai. *Inst.* 1.137a) in post-Augustan Rome for a husband's divorce, his termination of the marriage contract (see Treggiari 1991: 436–7). A particularly 'prosaic' term, it seems not to be attested in poetry after Lucilius until Senecan tragedy: see also *Ag.* 283, *HO* 432. Divorce was very common among the elite of imperial Rome, where a divorced woman could generally return to her father's house or that of a male relative. The foreigner Medea lacks all familial support. On the configuration of the Medea–Jason split as 'a Roman-style *repudium*', see McAuley (2008), 86. Note Medea's focus on herself as the subject of narrative. To some members of the audience this would have had a metaliterary reson-ance, signalling the play to be unfolded. Seneca's own dramatic 'narrative' of Medea's *repudium*. Medea's *furor*, 'frenzy' (52), may seem in retrospect to embrace poetic inspiration as well as the wrathful drive to vengeance. Cf. 424, where Medea is similarly con-cerned that her story be told. See further on 28–31, and Introd., cxvii–cxviii. *Narrentur* is jussive/hortatory subjunctive. For other metaliterary/metatheatrical uses of *narrare/enarrare*, see *Tro.* 1067 (and Boyle *ad loc.*), *HF* 40.

repudia thalamis: a double tribrach begins the line. For this unusual metrical opening, cf. 172, 433 below, *Tro.* 642, 908, 1178, *Ag.* 194, 959. For *repudium*, see above.

linquis: the universal reading of the main MSS. For the present indicative in a deliberative question, common in early Latin, cf. *HF* 964, *Pha.* 450—also Cat. 1.1, Virg. *Aen.* 3.88. There are no grounds for accepting with Zwierlein the inferior reading, *linques*.

rumpe iam segnes moras/Act now: lit. 'now break off sluggish delays'; cf. Ovid's Medea at *Her.* 12.47–8: *accingere et omnem | pelle moram*, 'Arm yourself and banish all delay', which Seneca has rewritten (and 'contaminated' with Virgilian allusion) in these last lines of the prologue (51 and 54). *Moral dilatio*, 'delay', is sometimes said to be the 'greatest cure for anger' (*maximum remedium irae*, *Ira* 2.29.1, 3.12.4) and so clearly needs removing. But, like *narrentur* above, the language here has metapoetic function. The phrase is Virgilian (*segnis | rumpe moras*, *Geo.* 3.42–3) and comes from a passage in which the poet commands himself to end his prologue and commence his subject proper. So Medea commands herself to end her prologue and begin her poetic creation proper, the dramatic action. For *rumpe… moras*, see also *Tro.* 681, Virg. *Aen.* 4.569, 9.13. For *iam*, 'now', at the end of a prologue, see also *HF* 54, *Ag.* 56; cf. *iamdudum* at *Tro.* 65, *Oed.* 80.

55. *quae scelere… /The house born…*: a ringing, neatly balanced *sententia* concludes the prologue. For the use of *sententiae* (aphorisms or maxims trenchantly expressed) in first-century CE rhetorical practice, see Quintilian, who cautioned restraint (*Inst.* 8.5.25–34) but understood their closural function (*Inst.* 8.5.27) and emotional power (*Inst.* 12.10.38): 'They strike the mind and with one blow frequently impel it and by their very brevity cling there the more (*ipsa breuitate magis haerent*)'. They are sometimes used climactically by Seneca to end a section or scene, as here (cf. *Oed.* 86, *Tro.* 425, *Thy.* 470) or to round off a speech, as here (see 176, 431, 559 below, *HF* 353, 513, *Pha.* 430); they are also sometimes used for rebarbative purposes (see e.g. the verbal duel between Phaedra and Theseus at *Pha.* 872–81, between Pyrrhus and Agamemnon at *Tro.* 327–36, and between Medea and the Nurse at 157–67 below). The employment of

sententia is a conspicuous feature of the declamatory style of early imperial Roman literature, including that of Seneca (see e.g. on 150–4, 155–76, 155–7, 159–63, 176). Seneca was especially taken with the *sententiae* of Publilius Syrus, which were popular with the declaimers (Sen. *Rhet. Con.* 7.2.14, 3.8, 4.8), and which Seneca declared were often more appropriate to tragedy than mime: *quam multa Publilii non excaleatis sed coturnatis dicenda sunt*, 'How many lines of Publilius should be spoken not by comedy/mime actors but by those of tragedy' (*Ep.* 8.8). Seneca, of course, did not only adapt existing aphorisms but, as here, often created his own aphoristic utterances. The present *sententia* influenced one of Medea's twentieth-century successors: 'Je t'ai suivi dans le crime, il va me falloir du sang et un crime pour te quitter' (Anouilh, *Médée*, Freeman ed., p. 172)—and one of her twenty-first-century ones: 'In crime I have gained my home; in crime I must leave it' (Enoch, *Black Medea*, sect. IV, p. 74).

parta/born: for the language of parturition, see on 23–6.

Exit MEDEA *into her house*: line 55 seems to be spoken as an exit-line, and line 116 seems to suggest that Medea heard the wedding-hymn from within her house, as in Ovid's *Heroides* (see on 116–17).

FIRST CHORAL ODE: THE 'PROCESSIONAL ODE' (56–115)

The Chorus enter and sing a processional hymn or wedding song in celebration of the marriage of Jason and Creusa. Dramatically their ode is more effective if the hymn is sung during a wedding procession featuring Creusa and Jason (see below). Hine *ad loc.* argues that the dramatic situation for the wedding song is not specified, but references to ritual abuse, fescennine jesting, and the lighting of torches, coupled with the focus on the visual beauty, the sheer spectacle, of the bride and groom, suggest a wedding procession. So does the intertextual play with Ovid (see below).

In both Greece and Rome the procession of the bride from her father's home to that of her husband usually took place in the evening, preceded by the wedding ceremony itself (and in imperial Rome the marriage contract), the sacrifice, and the banquet at the