

**From the Indus to the Araxes:  
 Place Names and Geography in Seneca's Medea**

<p><b>1. (Vergil, Georgics 3.26-27)<sup>1</sup></b>          in foribus pugnam ex auro solidoque elephanto          Gangaridum faciam victorisque arma Quirini</p>	<p><b>1. (Vergil, Georgics 2.26-27)<sup>2</sup></b>          On the doors I will depict out of gold and solid          ivory the battle of the Ganges and the arms of          victorious Quirinus</p>
<p><b>(Vergil, Aeneid 8.705-6)</b>          ...omnis eo terrore Aegyptus et Indi,          omnis Arabs, omnes vertebant terga Sabaei.</p>	<p><b>(Vergil, Aeneid 8.705-6)</b>          from that terror all of Egypt and the Indians, all          the Arabs and all the Sabines turn their backs</p>
<p><b>2. (Servius)<sup>3</sup></b>          Araxes hic fluvius Armeniae, quem pontibus nisus          est Xerxes concendere. cui Alexander Magnus          pontem fecit, quem fluminis incrementa          ruperunt. postea Augustus firmiore ponte eum          ligavit, unde ad Augusti gloriam dixit, "pontem          indignatus Araxes".</p>	<p><b>2. (Servius)</b>          Here the Araxes is a river of Armenia, which          Xerxes tried to scale with bridges. Alexander          the Great made a bridge for it, which the river's          floods broke. Later Augustus bound it with a          stronger bridge, from which [Vergil] said          regarding the glory of Augustus, "the Araxes,          resenting the bridge".</p>
<p><b>(Vergil, Aeneid 8.728)</b>          ...pontem indignatus Araxes.</p>	<p><b>(Vergil, Aeneid 8.728)</b>          the Araxes, resenting the bridge</p>
<p><b>3. (Ovid, Tristia 4.2.37-47)<sup>4</sup></b>          hic lacus, hi montes, haec tot castella, tot amnes          plena ferae caedis, plena crux erant.          Drusus in his meruit quondam cognomina terries,          quae bene progenies, Digna parente, tulit.          cornibus hic fractis viridi male tectus ab ulva          decolor ipse suo sanguine Rhenus erat.          crinibus en etiam fertur Germania passis,          et ducis invicti sub pede maesta sedet</p>	<p><b>3. (Ovid, Tristia 4.2.37-47)<sup>5</sup></b>          "This lake, these mountains, these many forts, all          the rivers were filled with wild slaughter, filled          with gore. Drusus once earned in this land a          surname, which his son, one worthy of his          father, justly adopted. This thing with broken          horns and sorry covering of green sedge was          the Rhine himself, discoloured with his own          blood. See! even Germany is borne along with          streaming locks, seated in grief at the feet of          the unconquered leader."</p>
<p><b>4. (Seneca, Medea 374)</b>  <u>Second Choral Ode:</u>          Albin Persae Rhenumque bibunt</p>	<p><b>4. (Seneca, Medea 374)</b>  <u>Second Choral Ode:</u>          Persians drink the Elbe and the Rhine</p>
<p><b>5. (Seneca, Medea 35-36)</b>  <u>Medea (Prologue/Act 1):</u>          gemino Corinthos litori opponens moras          cremata flammis maria committat duo</p>	<p><b>5. (Seneca, Medea 35-36)</b>  <u>Medea (Prologue/Act 1):</u>          Let Corinth, putting obstacles down on the twin          shore, bring together the two seas, burned by          flames</p>

<sup>1</sup> Vergil quotes in Latin are from Hirtzel.

<sup>2</sup> All English translations are my own, unless otherwise noted

<sup>3</sup> Latin text from Thilo and Hagen.

<sup>4</sup> Latin from Wheeler.

<sup>5</sup> Trans. Wheeler.

<p><b>(Seneca, Medea 44-45)</b>  <u>Medea (Prologue/Act 1):</u>          quodcumque visit Phasis aut Pontus nefas,          videbit Isthmos</p>	<p><b>(Seneca, Medea 44-45)</b>  <u>Medea (Prologue/Act 1):</u>          whatever evil the Phasis and Pontus saw, it will          see the Isthmus</p>
<p><b>6. (Seneca, Medea 745)</b>  <u>Medea (Act 4):</u>          Tantalus securus undas hauriat Pirenidas</p>	<p><b>6. (Seneca, Medea 745)</b>  <u>Medea (Act 4):</u>          Let Tantalus untroubled exhaust the Peirene's          waters</p>
<p><b>7. (Seneca, Medea 793-96)</b>  <u>Medea (Medea's song):</u>          sic face tristem pallida lucem              funde per auras,          horrore novo terre populous          inque auxilium, Dictynna, tuum          pretiosa sonent aera Corinthi.</p>	<p><b>7. (Seneca, Medea 793-96)</b>  <u>Medea (Medea's song):</u>          Thus pour sad light from a pale torch              through the breezes,          terrify the people with a new horror          and let the costly bronze of Corinth ring          in your aid, Diana.</p>
<p><b>8. (Seneca, Medea 350-60)</b>  <u>Second Choral Ode</u>          Quid cum Siculi virgo Pelori,          rabidos utero succincta canes,          omnis pariter solvit hiatus?          quis non totos horruit artus          totiens uno latrante malo?          quid cum Ausonium dirae pestes          voce canora mare mulcerent,          cum Pieria resonans cithara              Thracius Orpheus          solitam cantu retinere rates          paene coegit Sirena sequi?</p>	<p><b>8. (Seneca, Medea 350-60)</b>  <u>Second Choral Ode</u>          What about when the girl of Sicilian Pelorus,          girt in her belly with rabid dogs,          released all her gaping [mouths] together?          Who did not bristle all their limbs from          a single monster barking so often?          What about when dreadful diseases softened          the Ausonian sea with a harmonious voice,          when Thracian Orpheus resounding with his              Pierian cithara          nearly forced a Siren follow, although she used          to hold ships back with her song?</p>
<p><b>9. (Seneca, Medea 408-10)</b>  <u>Medea (Act 3):</u>          quae Scylla, quae Charybdis Ausonium mare          Siculumque sorbens, quaeve anhelantem              premens          Titana tantis Aetna fervebit minis?</p>	<p><b>9. (Seneca, Medea 408-10)</b>  <u>Medea (Act 3):</u>          What Scylla, what Charybdis drinking the          Ausonian and Sicilian seas, or what Etna          overwhelming the gasping Titan will surge with          threats as great [as my own]?</p>
<p><b>10. (Seneca, Medea 707)</b>  <u>Nurse (Act 4):</u>          quaecumque generat invius saxis Eryx</p>	<p><b>10. (Seneca, Medea 707)</b>  <u>Nurse (Act 4):</u>          whatever Eryx, impassable in rocks, begets</p>
<p><b>11. (Rosenmeyer, 1989)</b>          the maps on which [Seneca] relied were not those of the cartographers. They were the creation of          the mythographers and the poets who drew on the myths, reinforced by the imperial propaganda          of conquest and colonization, and by the common belief that heaven and hell may be reached if          only you travel far enough.</p>	

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**Complete Chart of Geographical References in Seneca's *Medea*, organised by relative location**

Line	Latin	English	Location	Larger area	Scene	Speaker
454	Pontici	Black Sea	Eastern	Black Sea	A2	Medea
456	Symplegades	Symplegades	Eastern	Black Sea	A2	Medea
43	Caucasum	Caucases	Eastern	Caucases	P	Medea
709	Caucasus	Caucases	Eastern	Caucases	A3	Nutrix
44	Phasis	Phasis	Eastern	Colchis	P	Medea
102	Phasidis	Phasis	Eastern	Colchis	C2	Chorus
164	Colchi	Colchis	Eastern	Colchis	A1	Nutrix
179	Colchi	Colchis	Eastern	Colchis	A1	Creon
197	Colchis	Colchis	Eastern	Colchis	A1	Creon
211	Phasis	Phasis	Eastern	Colchis	A1	Medea
225	Colchico	Colchis	Eastern	Colchis	A1	Medea
451	Phasin	Phasis	Eastern	Colchis	A2	Medea
527	Colchos	Colchis	Eastern	Colchis	A2	Medea
703	Colchis	Colchis	Eastern	Colchis	A3	Nutrix
762	Phasis	Phasis	Eastern	Colchis	C4	Chorus
871	Colchis	Colchis	Eastern	Colchis	C5	Chorus
983	Colchi	Colchis	Eastern	Colchis	A5	Medea
373	Indus	India	Eastern	India	C2	Chorus
384	Nysae	Nysa	Eastern	India	A2	Nutrix
484	Indiae	India	Eastern	India	A2	Medea
725	Hydaspes	Hydaspes	Eastern	India	A3	Nutrix
865	Gangeticum	Ganges	Eastern	India	C5	Chorus
215	Thermodontiis	Thermodon	Eastern	Middle east	A1	Medea
373	Araxen	Araxes	Eastern	Middle east	C2	Chorus
374	Persae	Persia	Eastern	Middle east	C2	Chorus
697	Sidoniis	Sidon	Eastern	Middle east	A3	Nutrix
710	Medus	Medus	Eastern	Middle east	A3	Nutrix
710	Parthi	Parthia	Eastern	Middle east	A3	Nutrix
711	Arabes	Arabia	Eastern	Middle east	A3	Nutrix
712	Hyrcaniis	Hyrcania	Eastern	Middle east	A3	Nutrix
723	Tigris	Tigris	Eastern	Middle east	A3	Nutrix
212	Scythicus	Scythia	Eastern	Scythia	A1	Medea
483	Scythae	Scythia	Eastern	Scythia	A2	Medea
528	Scythes	Scythia	Eastern	Scythia	A2	Medea
35	Corinthos	Corinth	Greek	Corinth	P	Medea
45	Isthmos	Isthmus	Greek	Corinth	P	Medea
299	Isthmo	Isthmus	Greek	Corinth	A1	Creon
745	Pirenidas	Peirene	Greek	Corinth	A3	Medea
783	Stymphalidos	Stymphalia	Greek	Corinth	A4	Medea
796	Corinthi	Corinth	Greek	Corinth	A4	Medea

127	Pelasgae	Pelasgus	Greek	Greece	C2	Chorus
178	Pelasgo	Pelasgus	Greek	Greece	A1	Medea
226	Graeciae	Greece	Greek	Greece	A1	Medea
227	Achivae	Greece	Greek	Greece	A1	Medea
240	Pelasgae	Pelasgus	Greek	Greece	A1	Medea
528	Pelasgis	Pelasgus	Greek	Greece	A2	Medea
697	Pelasgis	Pelasgus	Greek	Greece	A3	Nutrix
870	Pelasgis	Pelasgus	Greek	Greece	C5	Chorus
357	Pieria	Macedon	Greek	Macedonia	C2	Chorus
720	Athos	Athos	Greek	Macedonia	A3	Nutrix
76	Cecropias	Athens	Greek	Mainland Greece	C2	Chorus
80	Aonius	Boeotia	Greek	Mainland Greece	C2	Chorus
315	Attica	Athens	Greek	Mainland Greece	C2	Chorus
622	Aulis	Aulis	Greek	Mainland Greece	C3	Chorus
726	Baetis	Boeotia	Greek	Mainland Greece	A3	Nutrix
77	Taygeti	Taygetus	Greek	Peloponnese	C2	Chorus
81	Alpheosque	Alpheus	Greek	Peloponnese	C2	Chorus
149	Malea	Malea	Greek	Peloponnese	A1	Medea
313	Oleniae	Olenos	Greek	Peloponnese	C2	Chorus
639	Oeta	Oeta	Greek	Peloponnese	C3	Chorus
777	Oetaeus	Oeta	Greek	Peloponnese	C4	Chorus
784	Lernaea	Lerna	Greek	Peloponnese	A4	Medea
257	Thessalica	Thessaly	Greek	Thessaly	A1	Creon
336	Thessala	Thessaly	Greek	Thessaly	C2	Chorus
384	Pindi	Pindus	Greek	Thessaly	A2	Nutrix
415	Thessalici	Thessaly	Greek	Thessaly	A2	Medea
457	Iolcon	Iolcos	Greek	Thessaly	A2	Medea
457	Tempe	Tempe	Greek	Thessaly	A2	Medea
457	Thessala	Thessaly	Greek	Thessaly	A2	Medea
662	Pheraei	Pherae	Greek	Thessaly	C3	Chorus
720	Haemonius	Hymonia	Greek	Thessaly	A3	Nutrix
721	Pindus	Pindus	Greek	Thessaly	A3	Nutrix
791	Thessalicis	Thessaly	Greek	Thessaly	A4	Medea
358	Thracius	Thrace	Greek	Thrace	C2	Chorus
630	Thracios	Thrace	Greek	Thrace	C3	Chorus
631	Hebro	Hebrus	Greek	Thrace	C3	Chorus
721	Pangaeus	Pangaeus	Greek	Thrace	A3	Nutrix
374	Albin	Elbe	Western	Germany	C2	Chorus
374	Rhenumque	Rhine	Western	Germany	C2	Chorus
587	Rhodanus	Rhine	Western	Germany	C3	Chorus
712	Suebae	Suebia	Western	Germany	A3	Nutrix
724	Danuvius	Danube	Western	Germany	A3	Nutrix
350	Pelori	Sicily	Western	Sicily	C2	Chorus
350	Siculi	Sicily	Western	Sicily	C2	Chorus

355	Ausonium	Tyrrhenian Sea	Western	Sicily	C2	Chorus
408	Ausonium	Tyrrhenian Sea	Western	Sicily	A2	Medea
409	Siculumque	Sicily	Western	Sicily	A2	Medea
410	Aetna	Etna	Western	Sicily	A2	Medea
707	Eryx	Eryx	Western	Sicily	A3	Nutrix
379	Thule	Thule	Western	Thule	C2	Chorus