The Timelessness of the Parthians in Senecan Tragedy

Appearances of Parthia/the Parthians in Senecan tragedy:

1. *Phoenissae* 428
2. *Medea* 710
3. *Phaedra* 816
4. *Oedipus* 119
5. *Thyestes* 381-387

 nil ullis opus est equis,

There is no need for horses, for weapons or the artless missiles, which the Parthian discharges from afar when he simulates retreat. There is no need to level cities with siege engines drawn up them, whirling stones.

 nil armis et inertibus

 telis, quae procul ingerit

 Parthus, cum simulat fugas,

 admotis nihil est opus

 urbes sternere machinis

 longe saxa rotantibus.

1. *Thyestes* 462
2. *Thyestes* 603
3. *Hercules Oetaeus* 156-161

Spears could not pierce him, nor the bow drawn with a Scythian arrow, the weapons of the cold-eyed Sarmatian; or the Parthian, set below the dawn-bringing East, who aims wounds at neighboring Nabatea, more accurate than Cnosian blows.

non illum poterant figere cuspides,

non arcus Scythica tensus harundine,

non quae tela gerit Sarmata frigidus

aut qui soliferae suppositus plagae

uicino Nabatae uulnera derigit

Parthus Gnosiacis certior ictibus.

Text from Zwierlein (Oxford University Press, 1988). Translations are mine.

Works Cited:

Benjamin, Walter. “Theses on the Philosophy of History.” In *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt and translated by Harry Zohn, 255-269. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968.

Cattin, Aurèle. "La Géographie Dans Les Tragédies De Sénèque." *Latomus* 22, no. 4 (1963): 685- 703.

Boyle, A.J. *Roman Tragedy*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Grant, Mark. "Seneca's Tragic Geography." *Latomus* 59, no. 1 (2000): 88-95.

Nisbet, R.G.M. “The Dating of Seneca’s Tragedies, with Special Reference to *Thyestes*.” In *Seneca*, edited by John G. Fitch, 348-371. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Töchterle, Karlheinz. *Oedipus: Kommentar mit Einleitung, Text und Übersetzung*. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1994.