# 'Phoenissae', 'Phoenissa', 'Thebais':
# The Title of Seneca's *Phoenician Women*

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This paper aims to revise the *status quaestionis* of the title of a play by Seneca preserved in two commonly recognised variants — *Phoenissae* and *Thebais* — and two less well-known variants — *Phoenissa* and *Antigona*. It has been generally accepted that only the title *Phoenissae* is correct, and that this title was modelled on Euripides' drama of the name. This view, however, can hardly be deemed plausible, considering the substantial differences between Seneca's and Euripides' *Phoenissae*. Moreover, it has been widely held that there is no analogy for the title *Thebais* in the dramatic tradition but that it has equivalents in epic texts, which has led to the conclusion that *Thebais* is an ill-chosen interpolation. The other variants of the title have not been discussed at all. In this article we scrutinise previously disregarded sources and argue that all the play's titles may have originated in Classical Antiquity and may be regarded as synonyms. We also demonstrate that the interpretation of the title *Phoenissae* as referring to a Chorus of Tyrian maidens is purely speculative, since the links between Seneca's and Euripides' *Phoenissae* cannot be unequivocally defined. We posit that the Romans may have understood both the title of Euripides' play and of its probable imitation written by Accius as alluding to the heroines, Jocasta and Antigone. The examples found in Statius' verse may be used as evidence that the adjective *Phoenissus* was understood by the educated Roman public as *Thebanus*. In the final part of the paper, we analyse the dramatic action of *Phoenissae*, which leads us to the conclusion that the interpretation of the title as a metonymic term describing Jocasta and Antigone is accurate.

*Keywords*: Seneca the Younger, *Phoenissae*, *Thebais*, Roman tragedy.

The title of Seneca's *Phoenician Women* has not been satisfactorily examined in the literature. Commentators usually note that the title has been preserved in two versions: *Phoenissae* (codex Etruscus)[1] and *Thebais* (A MSS).[2] They assume that the heading *Phoenissae* is modelled on the title of Euripides' tragedy and, as in Euripides, refers to a Chorus of Phoenician girls, although the Chorus does not appear in Seneca's tragedy. If the title was Seneca's it could suggest that he originally intended to include a Chorus, but later changed his mind. However, all commentators agree that, taking into account the place of the action in the first part of the play, there is little room for the Chorus in the surviving version of the tragedy. Alternatively, if one assumes that the text was unfinished and the title was not the author's choice, the heading *Phoenissae* is believed to have been added later by a copyist because of the play's apparent similarity to Euripides' (the lack of a Chorus notwithstanding). As for the title *Thebais*, this is assumed to be rooted in the epic rather than the tragic tradition and refers to the mythological theme of the Seven against Thebes. It is therefore, incompatible with the first part of the play, which takes the form of a conversation between Oedipus and Antigone.[3]

In the codex Etruscus the title appears in two variants: *Phoenissae* in the opening and closing formula of the play, and *Phoenissa* on the title page of the collection of Seneca's nine tragedies. The form *Phoenissa* may be construed as *Phoenissa tragoedia*, by analogy with *Thebais* (meaning 'the song of Thebes'). However, another interpretation is worth considering — it may refer to the heroine. This hypothesis is supported, among others, by the headings in codex M, one of three manuscripts (MNF[4]) that may derive from the same source (Σ). For the most part, their reading corresponds with the Etruscus, although it is not clear whether they were based on it or represent an independent group of E. In all these codices, *Phoenissae* were copied from a family A manuscript, but the rubricator M probably used not only A but also E as a point of reference, as the markings of characters and the headings of the play in M are closer to the Etruscus than to N or F. Manuscript M gives the nine tragedies in the same order as the Etruscus.[5] The opening formula of the

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[1]  Codex Etruscus or Laurentianus. Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 37.13. Late 11th century. It is the only manuscript that represents exclusively family E. For more details on the manuscript tradition of Seneca's tragedies, see MacGregor 1985, 1135–1241. Cf. Zwierlein 1984, 6–181; Philp 1968, 150–179; Tarrant 1976, 23–86.

[2]  We take family A to include five manuscripts, following, among others, Zwierlein 1986, Chaumartin 1996–1999, Averna 2002, and Boyle 2011, 2014, 2017: P (Parisinus. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. Lat. 8260. First half of the 13th century), T (Parisinus. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. Lat. 8031. 15th century), C (Cantabrigensis. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 406. Early 13th century), S (Scorialensis. Escorial, Biblioteca Real. T III 11. Second half of the 14th century), and V (Vaticanus. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Vat. Lat. 2829. Early 14th century). For a different treatment, see Tarrant 1976, where family A includes PCS, and Fantham 1982, Fitch 1987, Coffey, Mayer 1990, and Giardina 2007–2009, where family A comprises PTCS.

[3]  Frank 1995, 1, 9–10; Fitch 2002, 279. Cf. Leo 1878, 75–82.

[4]  M — Ambrosianus. Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana. D 276 inf. 14th century; N — Vaticanus. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Vat. Lat. 1769. 14th century; F — Parisinus. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. Lat. 11855. First half of the 14th century.

[5]  Scil. *Hercules furens*, *Troades*, *Phoenissae*, *Medea*, *Phaedra*, *Oedipus*, *Agamemnon*, *Thyestes*, *Hercules Oetaeus*. The tenth tragedy in M, *Octavia*, does not appear in the Etruscus, and was probably copied from a family A text. In N, the order of the nine plays differs from E and M in the position of *Phoenissae*, which is placed after *Oedipus* (although in the heading of the collection of tragedies the sequence reflects that in M). The heading of the collection features the title *Phoenissa*, while the closing formula of the play in fact does not apply to it since probably was copied automatically from a manuscript belonged to the E-branch of the tradition, as both opening formula of *Agamemnon* and closing formula of *Oedipus*; in the opening formula

tragedy, and the closing formula contain the titles *Ph(o)eniss(a)e* and *Antigona* respectively. The title *Antigona* may serve not only as a variant of *Phoenissa* but also as an alternative for *Thebais* (in the sense of 'Theban woman'), as according to the sophisticated mythological genealogy, Antigone — an inhabitant of Thebes and a descendant of Cadmus of the Phoenician city of Tyre — is also Phoenician. Two examples from Statius, where the adjective *Phoenissus* is employed to mean 'Theban', demonstrate that in Roman poetry of the second half of the first century AD, the word was used as an erudite metonymy, perhaps then already petrified (scil. *Phoenissus = Thebanus*):

> *Phoenissae sonuere domus, cum lassa furorem*
> *vicit et ad comitum lacrimas expavit Agave.*
> (Stat. *Theb.* 3. 189–190)

Neither did Phoenician homes echo more loudly when weary Agave overcame her madness and took fright at her companions' tears. (Trans. Shackleton Bailey 2003)

> *Premit undique nimbo*
> *telorum Phoenissa cohors*
> (*Ib.* 9. 526–527)

The Phoenician host presses him from all sides with a shower of weapons. (Trans. Shackleton Bailey 2003)

Moreover, the title *Phoenissae* may refer not to a Chorus of Tyrian maidens — which after all does not appear in Seneca's play — but to two Theban women, Antigone and Jocasta. This interpretation seems plausible for two reasons. First, any hypotheses about the Chorus' songs — whether Seneca intended to include a Chorus, or whether the Chorus' parts were written but have not survived — are pure speculation. The main argument against the idea that Seneca's play had a Chorus is the fact that the dialogue in the first part of the play takes place outside Thebes (as pointed out by Leo and as conceded by Frank).[6] More importantly although the second half of Seneca's play is supposedly similar to Euripides' *Phoenissae*, there are significant plot differences between

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of *Phoenissae*, the title appears to be missing, replaced by the names of the characters who speak in the first part: *Oedipus Antigona*. In F the tragedies come in the following sequence: *Hercules furens*; *Troades*; *Agamemnon*; *Thyestes*; *Hercules Oetaeus*; *Phoenissae*; *Medea*; *Phaedra*; *Octavia*; and *Oedipus*. The *Phoenissae*, *Medea* partly, and *Oedipus* were copied from a family A manuscript, while the other pieces from E, and as a result, the opening formula of the *Medea* is the same as in A ([…] *troas feliciter explicit. incipit medea*), and does not contain the title of *Phoenissae*. In turn, the opening formula of the play is omitted, and there is no heading of the collection of the pieces in F, although in the running head, *Thebais* (?) is used (albeit inconsistently).

⁶ Leo argues that because in the first part of the play Oedipus and Antigone are on a public road, the Chorus that one might expect to appear between the acts should comprise traders and troublemakers and, later, bacchants and satyrs (Leo 1878, 76–78). To solve the problem Frank suggests that the two parts of the play could be linked by a peripatetic Chorus. She concedes that a Chorus of Phoenician women in the vicinity of Kithairon is an unlikely option but proposes that it could be a Chorus of Theban women, who went out of the city for cult purposes and later returned to Thebes. Another possible solution could be the presence of two Choruses (Frank 1995, 9–10). Still, the identification of the Chorus does not seem to be the most important issue in the case of Seneca's tragedy. Regarding the Choruses in *The Trojan Women*, *Thyestes*, and *Phaedra*, Hill rightly points out that in Seneca's plays, the Chorus conveys meanings at a meta-level different to characters which take part in the action: sometimes the Chorus takes over their role, but on other occasions, it only contributes an emotional or philosophical commentary, so its voice does not directly belong to the order of the represented world although it is an inherent part of the play. This is why

the two. These differences would have to be reflected in the content of any choral parts, if Seneca did indeed write any.[7] Therefore, Euripides' Chorus cannot be treated as a model or point of reference when speculating about the Chorus in Seneca. Second, we have no grounds for the claim that the Romans understood the titles of Euripides' *Phoenissae* and Accius' *Phoenissae* (the surviving fragments of Accius' tragedy *Phoenissae* have similarities to Euripides' play[8] and Accius may have been a more important source of inspiration for Seneca than Euripides) to refer to a Chorus of Phoenician girls rather than to Jocasta and Antigone.[9]

Also, it is worth considering whether Seneca's variant titles *Thebais — Phoenissa — Antigona — Phoenissae* are interrelated in the same way as the variant titles of Seneca's *The Trojan Women*. In the Etruscus, *Troades* is used as the heading, while in manuscripts A and excerpta Thuanea,[10] the play is entitled *Troas*. It is usually assumed that *Troades*, meaning the Chorus of Trojan women or the three principal female roles (Hecuba, An-

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Hill compares the role of the Senecan Chorus to that of voices in the soundtrack, who need not, and usually cannot, be identified with the characters (Hill 2000, 587).

[7] The most significant differences include the following. In Euripides, Jocasta meets her sons in the city: Polynices arrives at his mother's request to start peace negotiations (Eur. *Phoen.* 81–87; 261–635). In Seneca's play, as the queen addresses Polynices on the battlefield, it may be inferred that she has not seen him since he was driven into exile (Sen. *Phoen.* 486–487; 501–502); thus, the scene of his coming into the city must have been absent in the play. On the basis of Jocasta's monologue (370–379) and from what she says to Polynices (526–528; 542–548) in turn, one may conclude that the battle between the enemy armies has not taken place yet, so the scene of preparation for the attack on the seven gates of Thebes, the description of the attack, or Creon's and Tiresias' dialogue and Menoeceus' sacrifice (cf. Eur. *Phoen.* 690–783; 834–1018; 1081–1199) could not have been included in the text. It is also highly improbable that Seneca's play may have contained the scene where Creon sends Oedipus into exile (cf. Eur. *Phoen.* 1585–1594), since the latter left the city before the assault of Thebes (Sen. *Phoen.* 281–284; 324–327; 358–362).

[8] This could account for a certain similarity of ideas and plot motives between Euripides' *Phoenissae* and Seneca's tragedy (listed in Moricca 1918, 7–14), which in the case of the Roman author are for the most part decontextualised. So it cannot be argued that Seneca scrupulously imitated Euripides' tragedy or a Roman text thematically related to the subject of his play (e.g., Accius' *Phoenissae*). Frank 1995, 21–27 comes to similar conclusions.

[9] The oldest hypotheseis to Euripides' *Phoenician Women* do not clarify the meaning of the title. A Byzantine hypothesis (Didndorf 1863, 10) says that the title refers to the Chorus in order to differentiate the play from Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes.* The Chorus of Phoenician girls is mentioned in the hypothesis ascribed to Aristophanes of Byzantium (Dindorf 1863, 3–4), but it is said there that what makes the tragedy different to Aeschylus' drama is the character of Jocasta. And it is evident that the roles of Jocasta and Antigone are prominent in Euripides' play (as well as in Seneca's) from the prologue to the exodos (see Papadopoulou 2008, 49–57, 70–72), moreover, their roles in the drama seem to be an Euripidean invention (see Mastronarde 1994, 25, 30; Papadopoulou 2008, 49, 71). So if Jocasta's and Antigone's position in the narrative structure is considered and if we bear in mind the meaning of verses 5–6 and 216–217, where the Thebans are revealed to be offspring of Agenor, the Phoenician ruler, so they were Phoenician as well, we may be justified in supposing that the Romans might have seen in Euripides' or Accius' plays the stories of two female descendants of the Tyrian/Phoenician king, i.e. Jocasta and Antigone. Furthermore, it needs to be observed that, although the headings of the ancient tragedies usually referred to one protagonist (e. g. *Hercules furens*) or to a larger group or ethnic community (*Persae*, *Supplices* and the like), there are examples of the titles encompassing two or three main characters, such as Accius' *Phinidae* (fr. 573–584: Warmington 1936, 520–524) — probably about two Phineus' sons, or *Pelopidae* (fr. 513–519: Warmington 1936, 500–502), probably about Atreus and Thyestes killing their half-brother Chrysippos, or about Atreus killing Pleisthenes (cf. Hyg. *Fab.* 86). Finally, it is worth adding that Seneca may have engaged in a play with the literary tradition, just as Euripides seems to have done adapting for his play the title of Phrynichus' drama *Phoenissae* on entirely different theme (see Mastronarde 1994, 209; Papadopoulou 2008, 78; and bibliography there; cf. Phrynichus fr. 8–12: *TrGF* 1, 75–77).

[10] excerpta Thuanea — Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. Lat. 8071. Second half of the 9th century.

dromache and Polyxena), is more suitable than *Troas*, especially given the fact that the play has no single main character.[11] By contrast, supporters of *Troas* interpret the title as "Poem on Troy" and so consider it well-suited to the theme of the play.[12] We find both lines of thinking flawed. In fact, Hecuba can be regarded as the protagonist.[13] It is also worth noting that Pseudo-Probus[14] cites *Troades* under the title *Hecuba*. The Trojan queen recites the prologue and the last longer part of the tragedy; most importantly, however, she emphasises that she is the one directly affected by all the separate misfortunes that befall the Trojans, thus presenting herself as the character most harshly treated by fate. Cf., for instance, Sen. *Tro.* 1061–1062:

> *sua quemque tantum, me omnium clades premit.*
> *mihi cuncta pereunt; quisquis est Hecubae est miser.*

Individuals bear just their own disasters, but I bear everyone's. Every death touches me; anyone who is wretched touches Hecuba. (Trans. Fitch 2002)

A more plausible hypothesis, in our view, is that the title used by Pseudo-Probus is a narrow interpretation of *Troas*, a synecdoche meaning "a Trojan woman", which refers, as *Troades* does, to the women of Priam's house — his daughters, daughters-in-law, and the queen herself — whose misfortunes are announced by Hecuba in the prologue, Sen. *Tro.* 56–58:

> *Non tamen superis sat est:*
> *dominum ecce Priami nuribus et natis legens*
> *sortitur urna, praedaque en vilis sequar.*

Yet this is not enough for the gods above: even now the urn is casting lots, selecting a master for the daughters and daughters–in–law of Priam, and I shall follow — see, a worthless prize! (Trans. Fitch 2002)

It is not an implausible assumption that these variants, together with the title found in Pseudo-Probus, are of ancient origin, which could account for the fact that excerpta Thuanea, witness of the E tradition, contains the A version of the title. With regard to *Phoenissae* and the practice of using various headings, there is a possible analogy with Accius' tragedy. Nonius Marcellus cites fragments of his *Phoenissae*,[15] and there is also an excerpt from Accius' *Thebais* in Marcellus's oeuvre. This would mean either that Accius wrote a separate tragedy called *Thebais*, or that the title *Thebais* refers to the same play[16] that Nonius more frequently calls *Phoenissae*, and that perhaps the play was known by both titles. In either case, one would have to reject the hypothesis that the title of Seneca's *Thebais* belongs to the epic tradition, and if one accepts the latter of the two scenarios, it seems likely that Seneca's play was known in Antiquity under the titles *Phoenissae*, *The-*

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[11]  See Keulen 2001, 14. Cf. Lawall 1982, 250.

[12]  See Stroh 2014, 435; and bibliography there.

[13]  See Herrmann 1924, 434–435; cf. Motto, Clark 1988, 242. Keulen 2001, 15 argues that Hecuba cannot be considered the central figure of the *Troades* because of her prolonged absence from the stage, but he states "she certainly contributes highly to the unity and the atmosphere of the play."

[14]  Ps.-Probus *De ultimis syllabis*: GL IV 224.

[15]  Non. 481. 30–31; 101. 19–22; 85. 12–13; 416. 9–10; 292. 23–24; 174. 2–3; 16. 1–3; 426. 2–3; 398. 2–4; 185. 6–8; 185. 16–17; 13. 16–17. Cf. Accius, *Phoenissae*, fr. 589–605: Warmington 1936, 524–530.

[16]  Non. 144. 15–17. Cf. Accius, *Thebais*, fr. 656–657: Warmington 1936, 548 and 549 d.

*bais*, *Phoenissa*, and *Antigona*. If this were the case, the version *Thebais* would be used in the sense in which it appears in Ovid (amongst other writers) when he speaks of Theban women: *Thebaides iussis sua tempora frondibus ornant* (*Met.* 6. 163) 'the Theban women deck their temples with laurel wreaths' (Trans. Miller 1916).

Finally, it is worth emphasising that both the heading *Phoenissae* (='Theban women') and the titles *Phoenissa — Thebais* are convincingly justified if considered from the standpoint of the exposition and further development of the plot. It is usually assumed that the main characters are Oedipus in the first part of the play and Jocasta in the second part. The parallels between the two characters are believed to follow from the fact that the focal point of both parts is not the conflict between the brothers but Oedipus' and Jocasta's reactions to this conflict. They are asked to act as mediators but react to the request in radically different ways. Moreover, both address the problem of their unconscious guilt and blame themselves for the disagreement between their sons.[17] Indeed, there is no denying that the parallels between the two characters are significant for the semantic organisation of the play and demonstrate its structural coherence. However, if we consider characters who pursue action to achieve their goals, and so are pivotal to the exposition and development of the plot, it is Antigone and her mother Jocasta who become the more significant characters. Both Antigone and her mother take steps to rescue their loved ones — father and sons — and to protect their home city against the effects of war.[18] By doing so, both perform the duties of the ideal daughter, mother, and citizen, models so often elated and commemorated by ancient writers.[19] In their attempts to convince the interlocutors (father and sons), both emphasise their loyalty and commitment that stem from kinship.[20] Antigone's efforts are half-successful: she saves Oedipus' life but does not persuade him to rescue the city.[21] Jocasta apparently fails: she will not prevent her sons from fratricide, nor will she succeed in saving Thebes.[22] Even if the city does not collapse, this will not be due to the queen's efforts.[23] Effectively, the play's tense finale (the thwarting of Jocasta's

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[17] Frank 1995, 3–5; and bibliography there.

[18] Jocasta's goal is to prevent the fratricide of Eteocles and Polynices and to avert the battle and destruction of the city (see especially Sen. *Phoen.* 443–477; 480–585; 599–643). In her conversation with Oedipus, Antigone focuses on saving her father's life (the reader learns about her efforts indirectly from Oedipus, vv. 1–4, and later, directly, from Antigone herself 51–79; 182–215) and on preventing the fall of Thebes (288–294).

[19] See, e.g., examples of Sabine women (Liv. 1. 13) and the mother and wife of Coriolanus (Liv. 2. 40; Val. Max. 5. 4. 1; Plut. *Cor.* 33–36; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8. 44–54 — both examples invoked by Frank 1995, *ad* Sen. *Phoen.* 443 and 522–524); cf. also other examples: Val. Max. 5. 4 and 5. 6 and the topical description of motherly love: Ps.-Quint. *Decl. ma.* 18. 10.

[20] See Antigone's words (Sen. *Phoen.* 51–76) and Oedipus on Antigone's attitude (Sen. *Phoen.* 80–82; 306–319); see also Jocasta's turns (Sen. *Phoen.* 459–477; 501–525).

[21] See Sen. *Phoen.* 311–319; 358–362.

[22] This result of the queen's efforts can be inferred from: 1) the remark of the Courtier, who guesses how the situation will develop from Eteocles' and Polynices' first reactions to their mother's request (Sen. *Phoen.* 442); 2) the words of Polynices, who compares his present situation to that of a slave and emphasises his determination (Sen. *Phoen.* 586–598); and 3) the escalation of the conflict between the interlocutors in the closing part of the play (Sen. *Phoen.* 651–664).

[23] If one follows Euripides on this point. According to him, the end of the war and the salvation of Thebes were the direct result of the brothers' decision to settle the conflict in a duel. Although the outcome of the duel produces a new conflict, the fact that the duel takes place makes the Argives less vigilant, and the Thebans taking advantage of their lassitude defeat the enemy (Eur. *Phoen.* 1223–1239; 1460–1472). In the context of the whole play, in turn, it can be concluded that the war was decided by Menoeceus' sacrifice (Eur. *Phoen.* 911–914). However, it must be pointed out that if the duel were of such decisive importance,

hopes of mediation) may be construed as an ending that does not need to be supplemented[24], since the drama's plot is complete. Thus, if we accept that *Phoenissae*'s plot is binary or that in fact we can discern two parallel plots in the play, we need to accept that Antigone and Jocasta are its main characters. The plot (as we have extensively discussed above) can be seen as binary because of 1. Antigone and Oedipus' interaction; 2. Jocasta and Polynices' interaction. The binary plot or two plots can be seen as parallel due to 1. the goals of the heroines; 2. their characters (*pia filia*, *pia mater*, *pia civis*); 3. their use of *pietas* as a means of persuasion; 4. the ultimate effect of their actions. The conclusion that the play's protagonists are Antigone and Jocasta fully justifies the opinion that *Phoenissae* — meaning Antigone and Jocasta, two Theban women whose ancestry is said to hark back to the Phoenician city of Tyre — may in fact be the original title of the tragedy. It is also worth noting that the use of the erudite ethnonym *Phoenissae* in the title — if it was not a petrified metonymy in Roman poetry, and thus semantically reduced — may in addition emphasise the idea encapsulated in two passages about the misfortunes haunting the Theban royal family:

> *optime regni mei*
> *fatum ipse novi: nemo sine sacro feret*
> *illud cruore.*
>> (Sen. *Phoen*. 276–278)

I know very well the fate of my kingdom: no one will bear that sceptre without accursed blood. (Trans. Fitch 2002)

> *Cadmus hoc dicet tibi*
> *Cadmique proles. sceptra Thebano fuit*
> *impune nulli gerere.*
>> (*Ib*. 647–649).

Cadmus will tell you this, and Cadmus' descendants. No Theban has been able to wield the sceptre with impunity. (Trans. Fitch 2002)

Oedipus and Jocasta observe that misfortunes have befallen all Theban rulers since the founding of the city. These two passages are in harmony with a part of the third Chorus of *Oedipus*, which stresses the Phoenician origins of Cadmus, the founder of the Theban royal family, and emphasizes that the misfortunes of Cadmus and his descendants were brought on them by the gods.[25] In this context, the term *Phoenissae* situates Antigone and

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Seneca would probably have introduced it in a different way, since there is no attack on the gates in the play, the brothers are ready to fight a battle (see Sen. *Phoen*. 414–419), and there is no mention of Menoeceus.

[24] Although the final may be also construed as an open ending. As pointed out by Tarrant 1978, 230, this is not Seneca's only play that ends in this way; analogies can be found in *Medea*, *Agamemnon*, and *Thyestes*.

[25] See Sen. *Oed*. 709–719: *Non tu tantis causa periclis, / non haec Labdacidas petunt / fata, sed veteres deum / irae sequuntur. Castalium nemus / umbram Sidonio praebuit hospiti / lavitque Dirce Tyrios colonos, / ut primum magni natus Agenoris, / fessus per orbem furta sequi Iovis, / sub nostra pavidus constitit arbore / praedonem venerans suum*. 'You are not the cause of these great hazards, not such is the fate that attacks the Labdacidis: no, the ancient anger of the gods is pursuing us. The Castalian grove offered its shade to the stranger from Sidon, and Dirce bathed the settlers from Tyre, when first the son of great Agenor, tired of tracking Jove's thefts through the world, halted afraid beneath our trees, doing homage to his plunderer.' (Trans. Fitch 2004)

Jocasta against the other family members and is a reminder that their lot, determined by ill fate or angry gods, is a continuation of the family history. For the same reason, the titles *Phoenissa* and *Thebais* can be regarded as more appropriate than an individual name — such as the heading *Antigona* — since they can refer to both Antigone and Jocasta and be interpreted as a synecdoche to represent the rule that governs the fate of both female descendants of Cadmus, the son of Agenor.

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