Maria de Fátima Silva
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Tragic Heroines on Ancient and Modern Stage

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Performances of Seneca’s plays are rarely seen on the Czech stages – the only staging of a play written by this ancient author before Burešová’s performance was *Phaedra* in 1977 in the Theatre at the Periphery¹, which was rather an adaptation, though². The idea prevails among (not only) Czech classical philologists that Seneca’s plays were not meant to be performed, so that they are extremely difficult – if not impossible – to be staged. At the same time, it would be naïve to presume Czech directors, having virtually no tradition of staging Seneca to fall back on, would be eager to search for interesting unknown ancient plays and put them on the stage. Without a close cooperation of both theatre-makers and classical philologists – which is the case in Burešová’s performance – the false idea of impossibility to stage this author can never be changed in the Czech Republic.

It would be instructive to find out the roots of this ‘superstition’ concerning (im)possibility of staging Seneca as its effects can be seen not only in the Czech Republic.

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² This, however, is true only with respect to modern staging of Seneca’s plays. There is evidence about his plays being staged by Jesuits during 17th century in several monastic and public schools.