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Intro

The Play
Sophocles taught his *Antigone* to a chorus of fifteen young men for the contest in tragedy. He wanted to entertain and educate his audience, for these had been the duties of poets since time immemorial. He also sought to defeat his two competitors for the prize in tragedy and be honored as best. How he fared with the judges that morning in Elaphebolion (roughly March) is not known. Never in doubt, however, has been the value that modern audiences have placed upon *Antigone* as a means for understanding the Athenians as well as their own experiences.\(^{1}\) Many have had access to Sophocles' Greek, but far more have read the play in translation. All of these readers are dependent upon the decisions made by the translator. For this reason, we begin with the assumptions that have guided our selection of one meaning or form of a sentence over others and the context that we have imagined for the play's original performance.

Translation consists of bringing the words of one language across a no-man's-land, as it were, in the translator's mind into those of another. It cannot be accomplished without the translator's having the necessary background knowledge and some notion about what the original is saying, as the apocryphal translation machine illustrates. Instructed to bring into Latin the English: "The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak," the machine, lacking a context for human courage facing its own frailness, set the statement in a dietary context by taking "spirit" as alcoholic "spirits." It was then forced to take "flesh" as "meat," and came up with: *Vinum valebat sed caro mitigata est* (the wine was strong, but the meat was tender). The machine also shows that translation is not a process of substitution. The simplest words, *thyra* /door, as well as the pregnant ones, *phronein* /to think/be minded/have understanding, do not have identical connotations much less identical meanings. Moreover, Greek and English have different structures, different ways of integrating words into sentences. Whereas English usually depends upon word order and less upon changing the shapes and sounds of words, such alterations or inflections are the rule in Greek and enable the order of the words itself to convey far more meanings and nuances than the basic order in English of subject-verb-object. Sophocles, for instance, places the adverb *eti* of line 3 in such a position as to modify either the verb ("Zeus is yet to fulfill") or the participle ("for us two yet living"), thus gaining two meanings from the single adverb. The translator, however, must choose between one or the other, limiting the text to one meaning, or duplicate the adverb, as we have done.

To the extent that multiplicity is lost or distortion introduced, the translator mistranslates the text, the inevitable sacrifice to the goal of reading *Antigone* in English.

From the first line, the translator confronts the abyss separating Sophocles' Greek from English. Our translation, "O common one of the same womb, dear head of Ismene" uses eleven words for five of the original. An endearment like "dear heart, Ismene" would be more readily understood than "head of Ismene" but with a false familiarity: the Greeks spoke of the head, not the heart, as the center of love and affection. Richard Jebb's translation, "Ismene, my sister, mine own dear sister," forfeits the slight delay in
discovering the identity of the addressee and dilutes the hyperbolic expression of kinship. Elizabeth Wyckoff's "My sister, my Ismene" and Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald's "Ismene, a dear sister" further diminish the urgency perceptible in the words of kinship. Kinship is emphasized in Andrew Brown's "Sisters, closest of kindred, Ismene's self " and in Richard Emil Braun's "Ismene? Let me see your face," although "Ismene's self " is no more English idiom than the literal "head of Ismene," and looking upon Ismene's face is not in the Greek. Robert Fagles' "My own flesh and blood--dear sister, dear Ismene" highlights the physicality of the kinship Antigone asserts with Ismene at the price of abandoning the Greek. "Ismene, my dear sister whose father was my father" (Greene) stresses the notion of the sisters' kinship shared through the father, an emphasis on father that not only is not in the Greek but imports father into words that denote kinship through the womb. Each version of line 1 promises a faithful translation, but they are not the same English, since the translator cannot escape imposing his or her layer of meaning upon Antigone of the written page.

Every translator responds to the author's plea, "Translate my meaning, not my words," by holding that meaning in the highest. But translators differ in how they articulate meaning, because their aims for their translation and their interpretations of the original differ. Condensation (Wyckoff, Fitts and Fitzgerald), paraphrasing (Braun, Fagles), and inserting interpretative glosses (Greene) familiarize the sense of things but easily slip into anachronism and inaccuracy. A translation produced by a scholarly poet (Braun) that strives for a text to be savored on its own merits serves well an audience that knows the original and can appreciate how the poet has refashioned its lines. For an audience that is ignorant of or not interested in the original, such a translation appears as the creation of a Sophocles fully at home in English. But Antigone is not a modern text and was not composed with a modern audience in mind. Whenever possible, we have used the same English word or phrase for the Greek so that verbal patterns and reminiscences may be traced throughout the play. We have on occasion departed from idiomatic English by beginning the sentence with a direct object of the verb or otherwise postponing full recognition of meaning. In line 557, for example, "Nobly you seemed to some, and I to others, to think," captures the pith of the Greek sentence in its first and last words. This allows the translation, at the cost of some ease of reading, to approach more closely the word order of the Greek and its unfolding impact upon Sophocles' audience.

Language can communicate thoughts, in part, because its speakers share the same context. No word can be so clear as to lack any element of doubt. Ambiguities and multiple meanings are the very marrow of Greek tragedy, and the medium capitalizes on the dependence of language on context for communication. The translator must choose from a word's semantic range to fit the context, but some words are more crucial than others. For Antigone, one such word is kakos, used as a noun and adjective and translated usually as "evils" or "evil." In each instance, the reader may substitute a more specific evil, for example, "exposure of corpses," for the evils in line 10. Another word is the noun taphos and its related verb thaptein, respectively, "burial, funeral feast, wake, funeral rites, grave, tomb" and "to perform funeral rites, bury, inter, entomb." Their exact meaning depends upon the context, which itself may be uncertain. Although taphos may be translated "mound" each time and thaptein "to bury," we have had to choose which English phrase best describes what we believe has happened. This selection is
complicated by the need to avoid the English word "burial" whose strong associations with complete interment tend to destroy the ambiguities of the Greek, ambiguities both inherent in the word and often, it would seem, intended by Sophocles.

In one case, however, the Greek is so fraught with nuances for an English reader that we have chosen to naturalize rather than translate this series of words by defining and using them as if English words. The adjectives philos/philoi, respectively, the masculine singular and plural forms, and philê/philai, respectively, the feminine singular and plural forms of the noun philotês, are usually translated "friendly" and "loved" and when used as substantives, as "friend" and "loved one." For instance, David Grene has Antigone say for line 73 of the Greek: "I shall lie by his side, / loving him as he loved me;" for line 81: "But I will go to heap the earth on the grave of my loved brother;" for line 523: "My nature is to join in love, not hate." Ismene speaks of Antigone in terms of love: "that though you are wrong to go, your friends are right to love you" (99), where "friends," it seems, is used to avoid the equally possible "your loved ones are right to love you." On the other hand, Creon must have his nephew Polyníce in mind in his opening address (162-90) and uses the same masculine adjectives, but philos/philoi become "friend(s)". Since the meanings of "friend" and "loved one" are simultaneously present, translation of these key words unavoidably introduces a dichotomy in the English that is not in the Greek. More significantly, translation obfuscates the semantic substratum that joins these words as expressions of obligation in a relationship.

Philotês, as Emile Benveniste has shown, belongs to a vocabulary of moral terms that is "strongly permeated by values which are not personal but relational." Rather than denoting psychological states, these words refer to the relations that an individual has with members of his group who are bound to one another by reciprocal duties and obligations. In its earliest known form, philotês expresses the obligations a member of a community has toward a xenos (stranger/guest). In Benveniste's words, "the behaviour expressed by phileîn [verbal form] always has an obligatory character and always implies reciprocity; it is the accomplishment of positive actions which are implied in the pact of mutual hospitality." This is the behavior expected of a host toward his guest, or the head of the household toward its members, particularly his wife. Such relationships readily extend beyond their institutional basis in hospitality or marriage to bonds of friendship, affection, and love, but these emotions are not essential to the bonds of philotês. Consequently, philotês need not indicate friendship, only an agreement concerning an action binding on its partners. When Hector and Ajax break off their duel in Iliad 7, they agree to exchange weapons and gifts. Their action constitutes a philotês between them. "They parted, having joined in philotês" (Iliad 7.302). They separate still enemies but now philoi, men obligated by an agreement.

Ideally, a translation should not be annotated. Sophocles' words spoke for themselves to his audience, most of whom knew what was needed to understand his play. But Sophocles' audience has passed away, and readers of his words in translation may need help with proper nouns and mythological allusions. The notes provide such information as the play itself does not make clear and are intended not only to clarify, but to provoke responses to, the text.
Ambiguity, double meanings, and the clash of connotations are all features of tragedy's destabilizing of language as a means of communication. A second type of note offers alternative translations when Sophocles' language opens a significant gap between what one character says and another hears. The Watchman may be saying that Antigone sees Polyneices' "body laid bare" or "his bare body," that is, once covered and now uncovered (426). Are the altars and braziers of Thebes filled "by the birds and dogs with food" or "with the food of birds and dogs" (1016-18)? Haemon greets his father with the answer the latter expects, "Father, I am yours," but with a condition Creon misses: "You would guide me aright, if you have good judgments that I will follow" (635-36). The Greek optative verb, translated conditionally as "you would guide," is the same form as the indicative "you are guiding." Haemon, it would seem, says the verb as conditional, which entails that his participle, translated "if you have," also be taken as conditional. But Creon responds as if he hears the word as indicative and the participle as stating the cause: "You are guiding . . . since you have." Creon wants Haemon to be on his side no matter what he may do (634) and expects to hear a factual statement of absolute obedience. The audience is open to both meanings. We print Haemon's meaning because this is what we think he says and append what Creon seems to hear in a note.

Another kind of note indicates Sophocles' allusions to what is said and done on stage. Sophocles' audience heard the words in harmony with the voices of the actors and choristers and within the context of all the phenomenon of theater and society. More happened than what was said. Much has been lost but not all, since the script holds clues, "stage directions," so to speak, to what transpired before the audience. Stage business that the script records should not be neglected, since Sophocles had his actor point it out even though the audience could see or hear without that aid. When Creon's slaves bring Antigone from the house (806), for example, she calls for the elders to see her. The elders would be looking at her in any case. Her lament over her lost marriage, sung before the house where, in real life, wedding processions were organized, suggests that she wants them to notice that she is wearing a wedding dress, traditionally violet in color. In this case, the hair of her mask would no longer represent the loose hair of the virgin but would be bound up, and her head would be hidden by a bridal veil. The Greek bride's moment of consent, her giving to her groom of her virginity and woman's life, came when she lifted her veil. Soon afterwards, the bride replaced her veil and left her natal home, never to return as her father's virgin daughter. Antigone's "see me," spoken by a woman in a wedding dress, suggest that she lifts her veil and, in the street for all to see, performs her own ceremony of the unveiling. Later (940), when Antigone calls for the elders to look at her, she lowers her veil for her procession to the house of her groom, Hades.

_Antigone_ was first performed in the spring of 438 B.C. at the festival of Dionysus Eleuthereus. In early summer of 439, the Athenians had successfully concluded their war against rebellious allies on the island of Samos. At that time, the general Pericles reportedly brought the commanders and marines of the Samian ships, members of the island's elite, over to the marketplace in Miletus (Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*).
There, he had them bound to boards and exposed them until they were nearly dead. He then had them clubbed to death and their bodies thrown away without benefit of funeral rites. Plutarch, who names the Samian historian and sensationalist Duris as his source, does not believe the story because other authorities do not mention it. Yet, the punishment resembles *apotympanismos*, crucifixion on a plank, which Athenians inflicted upon citizens guilty of heinous crimes. By all appearances, Pericles treated the Samians as disloyal citizens, and, in that light, their revolt is equivalent to *stasis*, factional discord among citizens, and analogous to the quarrel between Oedipus' sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, both of whom claimed the kingship of Thebes for himself. Sophocles surely knew about these events--as would his original audience--and perhaps was inspired by them.

In the months before the festival of Dionysus, Sophocles entered the contest for the prize in tragedy.

He submitted three tragedies and a satyr play to the magistrate, perhaps by reciting several odes. In effect, Sophocles was applying to the demos of Attica to grant him one of the three choruses available for the festival. As soon as the new magistrate entered office, he chose Sophocles and assigned a wealthy man to foot the expenses of costuming the choristers and paying their salaries and those of their trainer and the flute player. This same man, called a *chorēgos*, was likely also responsible for paying the *doryphorēmata* or "spear-carriers" (silent players). Sophocles' prestige and the *chorēgos' own desire to win honor for performing an important public office and a religious duty would ensure that he would be generous. Afterwards, Sophocles, perhaps with an assistant, trained the chorus of young men, but he was not involved (officially, at least) in selecting the actors. The demos provided the protagonist or main actor, and the latter picked the second (deuteragonist) and third (tritagonist) actors, for every tragedian used no more than three. Although success depended upon the vocal skills of all, the protagonist alone was eligible for the prize in acting.

The festival had long been anticipated, and finally the day arrived. The time was early in the morning of either the eleventh, twelfth, or thirteenth of Elaphebolion. Spring had come, and the seas were open for Athenians to leave on business and war and for others to come to Athens to see its crowning jewel, the contest for the prize in tragedy and comedy. Athenians, both young and mature men as well as women, along with foreign tax-paying residents, sat on the southern slope of the Acropolis. Officials and notable foreigners--magistrates, the priest of Dionysus and other religious dignitaries, judges of the contest in tragedy, and generals--enjoyed the honor of seats of wood or stone next to the orchestra. The audience was on holiday. They were a lively and noisy lot, some 14,000 to 17,000 strong, interested in the dramas and keen to shout approval and hoot disapproval.

**The Play**
The Play

Scene and Time: The area before the royal house of Thebes at the break of day (16).

Antigone
O common one of the same womb, head of Ismene,(11) do you know of any suffering of those from Oedipus that Zeus is yet to fulfill for us two yet living? Nothing painful, nothing †without ruin†,(12) no disgrace, no dishonor exists 5 that I have not seen among your evils and mine. And now, what is this proclamation they say the general(13) just laid down for the whole city? Do you know, have you heard, or are you unaware that evils worthy of enemies are marching down on philoi?10

Ismene
No word of philoi, Antigone, sweet or painful, has come to me since we two were deprived of our two brothers, each dead on one day by the other's hand. Since the Argive army left15 last night,(14) I know nothing further whether I am fortunate or ruined more.

Antigone
I thought as much. That is why I kept calling(15) you outside the courtyard gates so you would be alone when you heard.

Ismene
What is it? Clearly, you are deeply blue over some word.(16) 20

Antigone
Why not? A tomb--has not Creon honored one of our two brothers with one and dishonored the other without one?(17) Eteocles, as they say, †with just use of justice† and custom, he has hidden beneath the earth, honored among the dead below.(18) 25 But as for the corpse of Polyneices who perished wretchedly,
they say that proclamation has been sent forth to the citizens
that no one cover it with a tomb or bewail it,
but let it lie unmourned, unentombed, a sweet treasury
for birds looking upon it for meat.30
Such proclamations they say the good Creon
has decreed for you and me--me I say.
He is coming here to proclaim this clearly
to whoever does not know, and he considers it no small
matter. For anyone who does any of these things, 35
murder by public stoning in the city is ordained.
Now, this is the way it is for you, and you will show quickly
whether you are of noble birth or base born from good stock.(20)

Ismene
What can I do, wretched one, if things are
in this state, by loosening or tightening the knot?(21)40

Antigone
See whether you will join in the toil and the deed with me.

Ismene
What dangerous enterprise? What ever are you thinking?

Antigone
Whether you will lift the corpse with this hand?

Ismene
What? Do you intend to perform rites for it, a thing forbidden the city?

Antigone
For my brother, certainly, and yours, if you will not.45
I for one will not be caught betraying him.(22)

Ismene
Headstrong! When Creon has forbidden it?
Antigone
He has no part in keeping me from what is mine.

Ismene
Ah me! think, sister, how father,
died on the two of us, hated and disgraced, 50
when driven by self-discovered offenses, he pierced
both his eyes with a self-inflicting hand.
Then his mother and wife--a twofold name--
mistreated her life with twisted nooses.
And thirdly, two brothers in one day, 55
the wretched pair, worked a common fate by killing
themselves with hands turned upon one another.
Now in turn, we two left all alone, consider
how badly we will perish, if in violence of the law
we transgress the decree and power of absolute rulers. 60
No, we two(23) women must keep in mind we were born
women whose purpose is not to battle against men.(24)
Then, because we are ruled by those who are stronger,
we must hear and obey this and things yet more painful.
As for me, begging those below 65
for pardon, since I am being forced in this,
I will yield to those in authority,
for acting in excess has no sense.

Antigone
And I would not ask you, and if you wish
in the future, you would not gladly do anything with me.70
No, be whatever seems best to you. That one
I shall give rites. It is noble for me to die doing this.
I shall lie with him, philê with philos,
after I have done anything and everything holy,(25) since far longer
is the time I must please those below than those here. 75
I shall lie there for ever. You, if you think it best,
hold in dishonor the honored things of the gods.

Ismene
I am doing them no dishonor, but I am incapable
by my nature of acting in violence of the citizens.
You can make excuses, but I shall go, heap up a mound for a most philos brother.(26)

Ah me! unhappy one, how I fear for you.

Do not be afraid for me. Set straight the course of your own fate.(27)

Please, do not tell anyone what you are doing. Keep it secret, and I will do the same. 85

Ah me! Tell everybody. You will be more hostile if you keep silent and do not proclaim this to everyone.

You have a hot heart for cold things.

No, I know I am pleasing those I should most please.

If you can, but no, you lust for what is beyond your means.90

Well, when my strength fails, I shall cease once for all.(28)

From the outset, to hunt for what is beyond your means is not fitting.
If you say this, you will be hated by me
and justly be deemed an enemy to the one dead.
No, let me and the foolish counsel I offer 95
suffer something dreadful, but I shall not
suffer anything that will keep me from dying nobly.

[Antigone is exiting by the gangway leading to the country. Ismene calls after her.]

Ismene
If it seems best, go, but know this
you go without sense but truly a philē to your philoi.

[Ismene exits into the house. Without significant delay, the sounds of a musical instrument were heard. Stirringly familiar, they must have sent chills traversing the spines of men in the audience. Similar sounds kept the beat for hoplites in full armor on their way across no man's land to engage the enemy in battle. They came from an aulos, a clarinet- or oboe-like instrument consisting of a reed inserted into a cylindrical pipe pierced with holes. The number of holes determined its range. The aulos was usually played in pairs, both instruments held to the lips by a strap around the chin and over the head of the player. The latter was a splendidly garbed professional whose sounds kept time for the choristers. The choristers, representing Theban elders, as the gray hair of their masks would indicate (1092-93), were probably young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty. They were singing lines 100-54 as they moved solemnly but naturally in a rectangular formation, They danced in rectangular or circular formations, three abreast and five deep, that stylized those of the hoplites they were in training to become. Learning Sophocles' choreography and lyrics replaced for these select youths the usual activities of ephesbes during these final days of their youth. Sophocles put his best people on the left flank and his poorest in the middle line known as the "alley." In the middle of the left line, occupying its third position, the Coryphaeus or chorus leader was marked by his more brightly decorated robes. He addressed the actors in dialogue on behalf of the others and joined the others in singing the songs.]
Chorus of Theban Elders [singing]
Ray of the sun, the most 100
beautiful light of lights ever
to appear to Thebes of seven gates,
you appeared at last, O eyelid
of a golden day. Over Dirce's(30)
streams you came, and 105
the man shielded in white,
come from Argos in full armor,
you propelled into headlong flight
with your bridle gleaming brightly.(31)

Coryphaeus [reciting]
Stirred up against our land110
through Polyneices' contentious quarrels,(32)
screaming shrilly,
he flew into our land like an eagle,(33)
covered in snow-white wings
amid weapons manifold and115
helmets crested with horse-hair.

Chorus of Theban Elders [singing]
Arresting flight above our houses,
threatening with blood thirsting spears
in a circle the mouth of our seven gates,
he(34) departed before he sated120
his jaws with our blood,
before Hephaestus' pinewood blaze(35)
seized our corona of towers.
Such was the din of Ares(36)
that strove against his back,125
a din hard for the dragon's foe to subdue.

For Zeus exceedingly hates
the boasts of a big mouth, and seeing them
coming on with a mighty flow,
in haughtiness of ringing gold,130
he hurls the brandished fire at him(37)
who was already rushing to scream victory
at his finish line(38) high on our battlements.
Coryphaeus [reciting]
Swung outward, he fell on ground that repelled him, the fire-bringer who, 'till then, was reveling in frenzied bacchic onslaught and breathing the blasts of most hostile winds. But things went another way. Smiting heavily, he apportioned one doom for this one, another for that one, mighty Ares, our trace-horse on the right.

Seven captains at seven gates, marshaled as equal against equal, left behind bronze homage for Zeus Turner, except the pair filled with hate who, born of one father and one mother, leveled mutually victorious spears against one another and gained, both of them, a share in a common death.

But since Victory has come, Victory who brings renown, who reflects back to chariot-rich Thebes its own joy, distanced from the recent wars, now clothe yourself in forgetfulness. Let us go to all the gods' temples in all-night dancing. May earth-shaking Bacchus of Thebes be our leader.

[Enter Creon, attended by slaves]

Coryphaeus
Here the king of the domain, Creon, son of Menoeceus in the new chances of the gods, is coming. What cleverness is he rowing that, by common proclamation, he has set forth this special assembly of old men for discussion.

Creon
Gentlemen, the gods who heaved and tossed the city on high seas have set its affairs straight again. You I have summoned by messengers apart from the rest because I know well that you always revered the power of Laius' throne, and again when Oedipus righted the city and when he was destroyed, you still continued with steadfast thoughts toward their children. Since they perished in a twofold fate in one day, striking and being struck with murderous pollution among kinsmen, I hold all the power and throne according to nearness of kin to the dead.

Now, there is no way to learn thoroughly the essence of the whole man as well as his thought and judgment until he has been seen engaged in ruling and making laws. For, in my opinion, whoever, in guiding a whole city, does not adhere to the best counsels, but from fear of something keeps his tongue locked, that man seems to me now and before this to be most evil. Whoever deems a philos more important than his fatherland, this man I say is nowhere. I for one--may Zeus who always sees all know this--never would I keep silent on seeing ruin approaching the citizens instead of safety, neither would I ever regard as my philos an enemy of the land, since I am aware that this land is the one who carries us safely and, while sailing upon her upright, we make our philoi. By these laws do I enlarge the city.

Now, I have issued proclamations, brothers to these laws for the citizens concerning the children of Oedipus. Eteocles, who perished fighting for this city, fully proving his bravery in the spear battle, let them conceal him with a tomb and perform all the rites that go to the bravest dead below.

The kindred blood of this man, Polyneices I mean, the exile who, on returning home, wanted to burn his fatherland and the temples of his family's gods from top to bottom with flames, and wanted to taste common blood, and lead the rest into slavery, this person, it has been proclaimed to the city.
that no one honor with a tomb or lament with cries, but let him lie unburied, his body (46) devoured by birds 205 and by dogs and mangled for the seeing. Such is my thought. Never by me, at any rate, will evil men have precedence of honor over just men. But whoever is well-disposed to this city, dead and alive, equally will be honored by me at any rate.210

Coryphaeus
These are what please you, son of Menoeceus, Creon, about the one hostile and the one friendly to this city. To use every law, (47) I suppose, is within your power regarding the dead and us who are living.

Creon
Take care that you be watchers of my orders.215

Coryphaeus
Set forth this task for a younger man to undertake.

Creon
No, men to watch over the corpse are ready. (48) 

Coryphaeus
Then, what other things would you enjoin upon me?

Creon
Do not yield to those disobeying these things.

Coryphaeus
There is no one so foolish that he lusts to die.220

Creon
That is truly the wage. But profit with its hopes often destroys men.

[A man enters by the ramp from the country. Since Sophocles had only three actors at his disposal, the actor playing his role must be the same as the one who plays Ismene. He cannot be the actor who plays Creon or Antigone, since he appears on stage with them.]

Watchman
Lord, I cannot say that I arrive breathless from quickly lifting nimble feet.
In fact, I stopped many times to think, whirling around on the roads to turn back. My spirit kept talking to me and saying: "Poor fool, why are you going to a place where you will pay the penalty when you arrive? Wretch, are you dawdling along again? If Creon learns about this from someone else, how then will you not feel pain?" As I rolled around such thoughts, I was gradually and slowly completing the journey, and so a short road became a long one. At last, coming here to you won out. Even if I am saying nothing, I will say this anyway. I come here, clinging to the hope that I will suffer nothing except what is fated.

**Creon**

What has robbed you of your spirit?

**Watchman**

First, I want to tell you this about me. I did not do the deed, and I do not know who was the doer, and it would not be right for me to get into any evil.

**Creon**

You position yourself well in the ranks, drawing up fences around yourself against what is coming. Clearly you are going to mark something new and unheard of.

**Watchman**

Yes, terrible things impose much hesitation.

**Creon**

Will you say it, and then be off with you?

**Watchman**

Well, then, I'm telling you. The corpse--someone has performed funeral rites for it and is gone, having scattered thirsty dust upon its flesh and completed the necessary purifications.

**Creon**

What are you saying? What man was it who dared this?

**Watchman**

I do not know, since there was no blow from a pickaxe, no dirt was dug up by a hoe. The ground...
was hard and dry, undisturbed and unscored
by wagon wheels. The doer left no marks.
When the first watchman of the day showed us,
a wonder hard to grasp came over all of us.
You see, he had disappeared. He was not covered with a tomb, but a light dust was upon him as if from someone avoiding pollution. No marks appeared
of a beast or dog that had come and torn him.
Bad words started howling at one another
as guard reproached guard, and it would have ended in blows. No one was there to stop it.
Each man was the one who did the deed,
and none beyond doubt, and each was pleading, "I do not know."
We were even prepared to take up hot ingots in our hands
and walk through fire and swear an oath by the gods that we did not do the deed, or share in knowledge of it with the man who planned and accomplished it.
At last, when nothing was left for us to look for, someone spoke out, and he turned every head
to the ground in fear, for we could not answer him or see how, in doing so, we could prosper. His word was that this deed
had to be reported to you and must not be hidden. This plan prevailed, and the lot condemned me, unlucky me, to take this good thing to you. I do not want to be here. Those here do not want me, I know. Nobody loves the messenger of bad news.

Coryphaeus
Lord, deep and anxious thoughts have long been counseling, might not this deed be one driven by the gods.

Creon
Stop, before your words fill me with rage, so you will not be discovered both senseless and old.
You are saying what is intolerable when you say divinities have forethought for this corpse.
While they were hiding him, were they honoring him as a benefactor, someone who came to fire their temples ringed with columns and offerings and to scatter their land and laws hither and yon?
Or, do you see gods honoring evil men?
It cannot be. No, from the first men of the city,
bearing these things with difficulty, have been howling at me in secret, shaking their heads and not keeping their necks rightly beneath the yoke so as to love and submit to me. Because of those men, I know well these men have done these things under the seduction of bribes.

No base custom ever grew among men like silver. It sacks cities and uproots men from their homes. It teaches and perverts the useful minds of men so that they take up disgraceful endeavors. It showed men how to practice wickedness and to know impiety in every deed. Men who execute these actions in the pay of another, sooner or later bring about their own punishment.

[To the Watchman.]

But, if Zeus yet enjoys respect from me, know this well--I am speaking now on my oath--unless all of you find the perpetrator of this rite and produce him before my eyes, Hades alone will not be enough for you until, hung up alive, you reveal this outrage. This way you can go on stealing in the future with the knowledge of where profits must be made, having learned that you must not be philos to profits from everywhere. From disgraceful gains, more men you could see ruined than rescued.

Watchman
Will you allow me to speak, or do I just turn around and go?

Creon
Do you not know, even now, how annoying you sound?

Watchman
Are you stung in your ears or to your very essence?

Creon
Why do you score where I hurt?

Watchman
The doer offends your mind, but I your ears.
Creon
My, but you are a babbler.320

Watchman
That may be so, but not the one who did this deed.

Creon
That too, while also forfeiting your very essence for silver.

Watchman
Pah!
It is terrible for one who supposes to suppose falsely.

Creon
Go ahead, play around with suppositions, but if you do not show me what men did this, you are going to admit325 that terrible are those profits that bring pain.

[Watchman is exiting to the country.]

Watchman
I really hope they find him, but whether he is caught or not (luck will decide), there is no way you will see me come back here.(57)
Now, saved beyond hope and judgment,330 I owe the gods a big debt of gratitude.
Chorus of Theban Elders
Many things cause terror and wonder, yet nothing
is more terrifying and wonderful than man.
This thing goes across the gray
sea on the blasts of winter
storms, passing beneath
waters towering 'round him. The Earth,
eldest of the gods,
unwithering and untiring, this thing wears down
as his plows go back and forth year after year
furrowing her with the issue of horses. (58)

This thing ensnares and carries off
the tribe of light-minded birds,
the companies of wild beasts, and
the sea's marine life
with coils of woven meshes--
this keenly skilled man. He has power
through his ways over the beast who traverses
the mountains and haunts the open sky. (59)
The shaggy-maned horse he tames with yoke,
and the untiring mountain bull.

Both language and thought swift as wind
and impulses that govern cities,
he has taught himself, as well as how
to escape the shafts of rain
while encamped beneath open skies.
All resourceful, he approaches no future thing
to come without resource. From Hades alone
he will not contrive escape.
Refuge from baffling diseases
he has devised.

Possessing a means of invention, a skillfulness beyond expectation,
now toward evil he moves, now toward good.
By integrating the laws of the earth
and justice under oath sworn to the gods,
he is lofty of city. Citiless is the man with whom ignobility
because of his daring dwells.
May he never reside at my hearth
or think like me, who ever does such things.375

[The Watchman returns, leading Antigone and accompanied by at least one other watchman (382), played by a *doryphorêma*.

**Coryphaeus**
Concerning this divine portent, I am of two minds. How, when I know her, will I deny that this is the girl Antigone? O unhappy one, child of unhappy father, Oedipus, what does this mean? Surely they are not bringing you who are in disobedience of royal laws after they caught you in folly?

**Watchman**
Here she is, that one who did the deed. We caught her performing rites. But where is Creon? (60) 385

**Coryphaeus**
Here he is, returning from the house just when we need him.

**Creon**
What is it? What is happening? What am I in time for?

**Watchman**
Lord, mortals should never swear oaths against doing anything, for second thoughts belie their intention. I could have sworn I would be slow coming here after the tempest of your threats I weathered last time. But the joy one prays for and receives beyond his hopes seems to reach out like no other pleasure. I swore an oath not to come here, but here I am, leading this girl who was apprehended paying due rites. We did not cast lots this time. This is my windfall and nobody else's. And now, lord, take her yourself, question and examine her as you wish. I am free and justly released from these evils.400

**Creon**
How did you catch her, and where do you bring her from?
Watchman
This one was performing rites for the man. You know all.

Creon
Do you really understand? Do you mean to say what you are saying?

Watchman
Yes, I do, because I saw her performing rites for the corpse that you forbade. Is it not clear and plain what I am saying?

Creon
How is she seen? How was she caught and seized?

Watchman
What happened was like this. When we got back, still threatened by those terrible threats from you, we swept all the dust away that concealed the corpse, stripping the oozing body completely bare.

We then sat on the hill tops, backs to the wind, delivered from being struck by the stench.

Man was egging on man constantly with abusive taunts in case anyone might neglect this burden. So it went for some time, until the dazzling orb of the sun stood in the middle of the sky, and the heat was becoming intense. Then, suddenly, from the earth a whirlwind raised a column of dust, a pain from heaven. It filled the plain, mangling all the foliage of the trees on the plain. The great ether was full of dust. We closed our eyes and endured the divine sickness. When it let off after a long time, the girl is seen. She wails a bitter bird's shrill sound as when it sees an empty bedding's bed orphaned of nestlings.

So, too, when she sees a bare corpse, she groaned and began wailing and cursing evil curses upon the ones who did the deed. Immediately she brings thirsty dust in her hands and from a well-wrought bronze pitcher held up high, she encircles the corpse with three poured offerings. We saw her and rushed at her, and immediately we caught our quarry who was without fear or fright. We examined her about the previous and the present
doings. She did not try to deny anything, 435
happily for me and at the same time sadly.
That I have escaped these evils is
very pleasant, but bringing philoi into evil
is painful. But everything else matters less for me
to get--it is only natural--than my own salvation.440

Creon
You! you there, hanging your head to the ground, do you say
you did these things, or do you deny them outright?

Antigone
I say I acted. I do not deny acting.(64)

Creon
You may remove yourself wherever you wish,
free of a heavy charge.445

[Exit Watchman. To Antigone.]

Now you, tell me, not at length but concisely,
did you know that these were forbidden by proclamation?

Antigone
Yes. Why would I not? It was public.

Creon
And you dared anyway to transgress these laws.

Antigone
Yes, Zeus was not the one who issued these proclamations450
for me, nor did Justice, who dwells with the gods below,
define such laws among mankind.
I did not think your proclamations so strong
that you, a mortal, could overstep
gods' unwritten and unshakable traditions.455
Not today or yesterday but always
they live, and no one knows when they appeared.
I was not about to pay the penalty before gods
for neglecting them out of fear for a man's thought.
I knew very well that I would die (why not?),460
even if you had not issued your proclamations. But if
I shall die before my time, I declare it a profit,
for whoever lives beset, as I do, by many things evil, how does he not gain profit by dying?
Thus for me, at least, to meet with this destiny is no pain at all. But had I let the one from my mother, who was dead, go without rites, over that I would feel pain. Over this, I feel no pain. If I seem now to be acting foolishly to you, it may be that I am being accused of foolishness by a fool.

**Coryphaeus**
Clearly, the offspring is savage from the girl's savage father. She does not know how to yield to evils.

**Creon**
Even so, know that thoughts that are too rigid are most prone to fall. The strongest iron, baked very hard by the fire, you could often see shivered and shattered into bits and pieces. I know that spirited horses are brought to order by a tiny iron bit, since it is not allowed for someone who is the slave of those nearby to think big. This person knew how to commit outrage at that time by transgressing the laws that have been set forth. After she acted, this second outrage: she boasts about them and exults in having done them. In this case, I am not a man, but she is a man, if this victory will be hers without consequences. Whether she may be a sister's child and closer in blood to us than the whole of Zeus of the Boundary, she and her kin blood will not escape a very bad fate. I charge that other one of equally planning this rite.

[Creon to slave attendants]
Summon her. I saw her inside just now, possessed by frenzy and not in possession of her senses. The spirit of those devising crooked schemes in the dark usually convicts itself in advance of being a thief. I hate it when someone, caught in ugliness, afterwards wants to make it look pretty.

**Antigone**
Do you want anything more than to seize me and kill me?

**Creon**
For myself, nothing. With this, I have everything.

**Antigone**
Then, why are you waiting? As nothing in your words pleases me or could ever please me, so my words naturally displease you, too. And yet, where would I obtain a more renowned renown than by placing in a tomb one from the same womb? All these men here would agree with this, I would say, if fear were not locking up their tongues. But absolute rule is blest in many other ways, and, in particular, it has the power to do and say what it wishes.

**Creon**
You alone of these Cadmeians see it this way.

**Antigone**
These men of yours see it this way, but their lips cower before you.

**Creon**
Are you not ashamed to think apart from these men?

**Antigone**
No disgrace is involved in respecting your uterine kin.

**Creon**
Was not the one who died opposing him of the same blood?

**Antigone**
Of the same blood from one mother and the same father.

**Creon**
How, when it is impious in his judgment, do you grant this kindness?

**Antigone**
The dead corpse will not bear witness to that.

**Creon**
He would, if you honor him equally with the impious one.
Antigone
He was not a slave but a brother who died.

Creon
Yes, while ravaging this land but the other while defending it.

Antigone
Nevertheless, Hades longs for these traditional values.\textsuperscript{(68)}

Creon
No, the good man does not long to obtain the same allotment as the evil. 520

Antigone
Who knows whether that is revered below.

Creon
Never is an enemy, not even when dead, a \textit{philos}.

Antigone
It is not my nature to side with an enemy but with a philos.\textsuperscript{(69)}

Creon
Go below now, and if you must be philē, be philē, to them. While I am alive, no woman will rule me.525

Coryphaeus
Here is Ismene before the gates,\textsuperscript{(70)} shedding tears of sisterly philotēs. A cloud above her brows mars her flushed face, moistening her comely cheeks.530

Creon
You sneaked about the house like a viper and sucked my blood when I was off guard. I did not realize I was feeding two ruins and subversions of my throne. Come, tell me, will you admit you shared in this rite, or will you swear you knew nothing about it?535

Ismene
I have done the deed, at least if she rows along with me. I both share in the charge and endure it with her.
Antigone
No, justice will not allow you this, since you were not willing to do it, and I did not act in common with you.

Ismene
But I am not ashamed amid your evils to make myself a fellow voyager in suffering.

Antigone
To those whose deed this is, Hades and those below are witnesses. I do not cherish a philē who is philē only in words.

Ismene
Do not deprive me, sister, of dying with you and rendering the dead his due rites.

Antigone
You, do not die a common death with me. What you did not touch, do try to make your own. I will be enough by dying--I myself.

Ismene
And what life is philos for me bereft of you?

Antigone
Go, ask Creon. It is he you care for.

Ismene
Why do you cause me pain this way, when it does not help you?

Antigone
Yes, I am in pain, if I am mocking you, when I mock you.

Ismene
What help even now could I give you--I myself?

Antigone
Save yourself. I do not begrudge your escaping out from under this.

Ismene
O poor me, am I to fail in sharing your fate?

Antigone
Yes, you chose to live, I to die.
Ismene
But, at least, not without my words going unsaid.

Antigone
Nobly you seemed to some, and I to others, to think.

Ismene
And yet the error is the same for the both of us.\(^{(72)}\)

Antigone
Gather your strength. You are living, while my life perished long ago so as that I could help the dead.\(^{560}\)

Creon
I say that both of these children seem senseless, the one just now and the other from when she was first born.

Ismene
The sense that grows within, lord, does not remain with those who are doing badly, but it departs.

Creon
In your case, at any rate, when you chose to do bad things with bad people.\(^{565}\)

Ismene
Of course I chose. What life is there for me, alone without this one?

Creon
This one--do not speak of her, for she is no longer.

Ismene
But in that case you will kill your own son's nuptial rites?\(^{(73)}\)

Creon
Yes, the fields of others are fit for the plow.

Ismene
No, not in the way they have been fit together,\(^{(74)}\) this one to him. \(^{570}\)

Creon
I loathe evil wives for sons.

Ismene
O most philos Haemon, how your father dishonors you.

**Creon**
You and your marriage bed cause too much grief.

**Ismene**
Will you really deprive your own son of this one?

**Creon**
Hades will be the one to stop this marriage for me.575

**Ismene**
It is settled, so it seems, that this one dies.

**Creon**
Yes, for you and for me. No more delays. Take them inside, slave women. From now on they must be women and not let loose.
Even bold men flee when they see Hades already near their lives.

[Exit Antigone, Ismene and Creon's attendants. Creon remains on stage, standing alone against the backdrop of the house of Labdacus.(75)]
Chorus of Theban Elders
Fortunate are they whose life has no taste of evils. For those whose house is shaken by the god, nothing of ruin is left out as it creeps over most of their lineage.585 As the nether darkness from 'neath the sea, when it runs over the swell of the sea's main before the storm-laden head winds of Thrace,(76) rolls from the bottom590 dark sands, and headlands, pounded by bad winds, roar mournfully.

Ancient the pains of the house of Labdacus' sons I see piling onto the pains of the perished,(77)595 Neither does a generation set the lineage free, but someone of the gods dashes it down, and it has no release. Now, above the last root a light had been stretched on Oedipus' house.600 Again the bloody dust(78) of nether gods mows it down, folly of words and Erinys of the mind.(79)

Thy might, Zeus, what trespass of men could compass?605 It neither sleep †that enfeebles all† seizes, nor the gods untiring months, but, master unaging with time, you possess the dazzling splendor of Olympus.610 For futures near and far and for the past as well, shall suffice this law: nothing vast creeps upon the life of mortals free of ruin.

Far wandering hope, though a good fortune for many men,615 is for many others a deception of their flighty lusts. upon the man who knows nothing it creeps up until he burns his foot on the hot fire. Wisely from someone620 a word of renown has been revealed. Evil seemeth(80) at some time a good
to one whose mind the god
is leading to ruin.
He acts for the briefest time outside ruin.625
[Haemon enters from the city.\(^{81}\)]

**Coryphaeus**
Here is Haemon, last born
of your children. Does he come
tormented over the fate of his betrothed Antigone,
with whom he intended to marry,
anguishing over the deception of his marriage bed?630

**Creon**
We will quickly know better than seers could say.
My boy, you are not here, are you, after hearing
my fixed decree about your intended bride, in a rage at your father,
or as far as you are concerned are we, whatever we do, philoi?

**Haemon**
Father, I am yours. You would guide me aright,635
if you have good judgments that I will follow.\(^{82}\)
No marriage in my opinion will be worth
winning more than you leading nobly.

**Creon**
Yes, you should always be disposed this way in your breast, boy,
to assume your post behind your father's judgments640
in all things. For this reason, men pray to beget
and have sons in their households who listen,
that they may both repay an enemy with evils
and honor the philos equally with the father.
Whoever produces useless children,645
what could you say about him except that he begets
hardship for himself and great mockery for his enemies.
Do not ever throw out good sense, boy,
over pleasure for a woman's sake, knowing that
this proves to be a cold thing to embrace in your arms,650
a evil woman in your bed and in your house.
What wound greater could there be than an evil philos.
No, spit the girl out like an enemy, and let
someone in Hades' house marry her.
Since I caught her openly,655
alone out of the whole city, in disobedience,
I will not make myself a liar to the city, but I shall kill her. Therefore, let her keep invoking Zeus of Kin Blood.\(^{[83]}\) If I nurture my natural kin to be disorderly, then surely I will do so to those outside the family. 660 Whoever is a good man among those within his house will also appear to be just in the city. But whoever transgresses the laws and does them violence or intends to issue orders to those in power, this man cannot possibly receive praise from me. 665 Whomever the city may appoint, one should obey in small concerns and just, and in their opposites. For my part, I would encourage this man to rule nobly and to consent to be ruled well, and when assigned a post amid the spear storm, to remain there, a just and brave comrade beside his comrades.\(^{[84]}\) There is no greater evil than lack of rule. This destroys cities, this renders houses desolate, this in the spear battle causes routs to break out. But among men who are prosperous, obedience to command saves many lives. Thus a defense must be mounted for the regulations. Defeat by a woman must never happen. It is better, if it is bound to happen, to be expelled by a man. We could not be called "defeated by women"--could not.\(^{[85]}\)

**Coryphaeus**

In our opinion, unless we are misled by our years, you seem to say thoughtfully what you are saying.

**Haemon**

Father, the gods implant good sense in men which is the foremost of all their possessions. I . . . in what way you are mistaken in what you say,\(^{[85]}\) I neither could say, nor would I even know how to say. Yet, things may come out right in another way.\(^{[85]}\) Whatever, it is my nature to scout\(^{[86]}\) out for you everything that someone says or does or finds fault with, since your face is a terrifying thing for the townsmen because of words you are not pleased to hear. It is possible for me to hear things in the shadows, how the city mourns for this girl, that the most undeserving of all women is perishing in the foulest way for deeds most glorious.\(^{[85]}\)
She did not allow one from the same womb, lying without rites amid the carnage, to be ravaged by raw-eating dogs or some one of the birds. Is she not worthy of receiving a golden meed of honor? Such dark talk is spreading secretly about.

As far as I am concerned, there is no possession more valuable, father, than a father who is prospering in good fortune. What greater pride and joy is there for children than a father flourishing in fame, or what for a father in children. Do not wear one and only one frame of mind in yourself, that what you say, and nothing else, is right. Whoever imagines that he and he alone has sense or has a tongue or an essence that no other has, these men, when unfolded, are seen to be empty. But for a man, even if he is wise, to go on learning many things and not to be drawn too taut is no shame. You see how along streams swollen from winter floods some trees yield and save their twigs, but others resist and perish, root and branch. Likewise, the man in command of a ship who draws the foot sheet taut and leaves no slack, capsizes and sails what is left with his decks upside down. Let go your anger, and grant a change, for if an opinion comes up from me, a younger person, I say it is by far best that a man be born filled with wisdom. If he is not, for the scale does not usually so incline, to learn from those speaking competently is a noble thing.

_Coryphaeus_

Lord, it is fair, if he says something to the point, for you to learn, and in turn for you from him. It has been well said well twice.

_Creon_

Are we at our age to be taught in exercising good sense by a man of his age?

_Haemon_

Yes, in nothing that is not just. Even if I am young, you should not see my years more than my deeds.

_Creon_

What deed is this--reverencing the disorderly?
Haemon
I would not order you to act piously toward evil men.

Creon
Has she not been stricken by such a disease?

Haemon
The people, all Thebes together, deny it.

Creon
The city will tell me what orders I should give?

Haemon
Do you see how young you sounded saying that?735

Creon
Should I rule the land for anyone other than myself?

Haemon
There is no city that is one man's.

Creon
Is not the city considered to belong to the ruling man?

Haemon
Nobly you could rule an empty land, alone.

Creon
This one, it seems, battles as an ally(90) of the woman.740

Haemon
Yes, if you are a woman. For it is you I care for.

Creon
You most evil thing, by bringing your father to justice?

Haemon
Yes, when I see you making an error that is not just.

Creon
Do I err by revering my own prerogatives?

Haemon
You do not revere them by trampling upon the honor of the gods.

**Creon**  
You abomination who trails after a woman.

**Haemon**  
You would not catch me defeated by what is shameful.

**Creon**  
And yet, your every word now is for her.

**Haemon**  
And for you, and me, and the gods below.

**Creon**  
This woman, it is not possible for you to marry her while she lives.

**Haemon**  
Then she will die, and by her dying, she will destroy someone.

**Creon**  
Are you so bold as to threaten me?

**Haemon**  
What threat is it to tell you my opinions?

**Creon**  
You will convey sense to me in tears since you are empty of sense yourself?

**Haemon**  
If you were not my father, I would say you were not making sense.

**Creon**  
You slave to a woman, do not wheedle me.

**Haemon**  
Do you wish to speak, and after speaking, not hear anything?

**Creon**  
Right! But, by Olympus, know this: you will not revile me with criticism and get away with it. [To his slaves.] Bring that hated thing so this instant before his eyes she may die next to her bridegroom.
Haemon
No, not next to me. Do not ever suppose that.
She will not die next to me, and you will never
look upon my face again with your eyes.
Rage on at any of your philoi who are willing to let you.765

[Exit Haemon for the country]

Coryphaeus
The man is gone, lord, quickened by wrath.
The mind in pain takes things hard at his age.

Creon
Let him go. Let him act and think greater than what befits a man.
But these two girls, he will not save them from death.

Coryphaeus
Do you truly intend to kill them both?770

Creon
No, not the one who did not touch the deed. You are right.

Coryphaeus
By what death are you planning to kill the other?

Creon
By leading her where the path is deserted of people.
I will hide her alive in a rocky cave,
setting forth(92) enough food to escape pollution775
so that the whole city may escape miasma.
There begging Hades, whom alone of the gods
she reveres, perchance she will not die,
or she will come to realize, late but at last, that
revering what is in Hades is excessive labor.780

[Creon remains on stage.(93)]
Chorus of Theban Elders

Eros, undefeated in battle,
Eros, who falls upon possessions,
who, in the soft cheeks of a young girl,
stays the night vigil,
who traverses over seas 785
and among pastoral dwellings,
you none of the immortals can escape,
none of the day-long mortals, and
he who has you is maddened. 790

You wrest the minds of even the just
aside to injustice, to their destruction.
You have incited this quarrel
among blood kin.
Desire radiant from the eyelids 795
of a well-bedded bride prevails,
companion in rule with the gods' great
ordinances. She against whom none may battle,
the goddess Aphrodite, plays her games.800

[Antigone enters from the house, escorted by Creon's slaves (885).]

Coryphaeus

Now, by this time, even I myself am carried
outside the ordinances of the gods at seeing this.
I am no longer able to stanch the streams of tears,
when I see Antigone here approaching
the bridal-chambers that give rest to all.805

Antigone

See me, citizens of my paternal land,
walking my last
road and beholding my last
light of the sun--
ever again. But Hades,810
the all-provider of rest, leads me living
to Acheron's(94) shore,
without a share of wedding
hymns. No song
at my wedding sang out for me,815
but I shall wed Acheron.

**Coryphaeus**
Therefore, without renown and praise,\(^{(95)}\)
you are departing for the recesses of the dead,
neither struck by wasting diseases
nor obtaining the wages of the sword.\(^{820}\)
But under your own law, alive, alone and unique
of mortals, you will descend to Hades.

**Antigone**
I heard that she perished most sorrowfully,
the Phrygian guest,
daughter of Tantalus, on the peak\(^{825}\)
of Mt. Sipylos, whom a rocky
growth like tenacious ivy subdued.\(^{(96)}\)

Rain and snow,
it is the talk of men,
never leave her as she pines away.\(^{830}\)
Beneath her overhanging cliffs always weeping,
she moistens her valleys.\(^{(97)}\) Very like
her, the deity beds me.

**Coryphaeus**
No, she is a god begotten of god,
and we are mortals born to die.\(^{835}\)
And yet, it is a great thing for a dead woman to hear
that she obtains a portion with the god-like
while alive and, afterwards, while dead.

**Antigone**
O me, I am mocked.
Why, by the gods of our fathers, why
do you abuse\(^{(98)}\) me, when I have not gone\(^{840}\)
but am in plain sight before you?
O city and its men
of many possessions,
iô, Dircaean springs
and precinct of Thebes rich in chariots,\(^{845}\)
at least I possess thee\(^{(99)}\) as witnesses
to how unwept by philoi and by what laws\(^{(100)}\)
am I going to the rock-entombed vault
of my unprecedented mound.
Iô, wretched me, a corpse among people and not among corpses, a metic, not among the living, and not among the dead.

**Coryphaeus**
Advancing to the limit of daring, you struck the high throne of Justice, child, hard. You are paying, perhaps, for your father's prize.

**Antigone**
You have touched the most painful thoughts for me of my father's thrice-plowed lament and of all our fate for the renowned children of Labdacus. Oh, maternal ruinous delusions of beds and the incestuous sleepings of my ill-fated mother with my father, from such people wretched me was born. To them, accursed and unmarried, here I am going, a metic. Iô, brother, by attaining ill-fated marriages, dead though you be, you slew me still alive.

**Coryphaeus**
There is some piety in being pious, but power, for him who cares for power, proves nowhere to be transgressed. Your self-knowing temper destroyed you.

**Antigone**
Without laments, without philoi, without wedding hymns, I am led in misery along the road made ready. No longer for miserable me is it right to see the eye of this holy torch. My own destiny, unwept by tears, no one of philoi laments.
Do you not know that, instead of dying, not one person would stop pouring out songs and wailing, if allowed? Will you not lead her off as quickly as you can and enfold her in a roofed tomb, as I have ordered. Leave her alone and deserted, whether she may die or be entombed in such an enclosure alive. The fact is that we are pure in the matter of this maiden. In any case, she will be deprived of her metic status up here.

Antigone

O tomb, O wedding chamber, O hollowed abode ever guarding, where I am walking to my own, the greatest number of whom has perished, and Persephassa has received among the dead. Last of them, I, and by far in the most evil way, I am going down before my life's measure has expired. In arriving there, I nourish the hope, of course, that I will come philê to father and especially philê to you, mother, and philê to you, brother-head, since all of you in death with my own hand I washed and dressed, and gave liquid offerings at your tomb. Now, Polyneices, for laying out your body, I win such things as these. And yet, I honored you for those thinking rightly. Not even if I were the mother of children, not if my husband were dead and rotting on me, would I take up this task in violence of the citizens. For the sake of what law do I say this? A husband dead, there would be another for me, and a child from another man, if I lost this one, but with mother and father both hidden in the house of Hades, there is no brother who would be produced, ever. I honored you before all by such a law, and to Creon this seems to be doing wrong and to be daring terrible things, O brother-head. Now he takes me by the hand and is leading me away, unbedded, unhymned and ungraced by a share of bridal coupling and nurturing a child, but in this way deserted of philoi and ill-fated. I am going alive into the hollowed abodes of the dead. Having transgressed what justice of deities? Why should I in such misery look further to the gods? What ally of those who are allies should I look to, seeing
that, by acting piously, I have come to possess impiety?
If this should be good and beautiful before the gods, I would realize my mistake after suffering my doom.
But if these men are doing wrong, may they suffer no more evils than they themselves do unjustly to me.

Coryphaeus
Still, the same blasts of the same winds
of her essence are holding her fast

Creon
For this reason, those who are leading her
will be sorry for their slowness.

Antigone
O me, this word has come
very close to death.

Creon
I offer no consolation at all to take heart that these arrangements will not be executed as proposed.

Antigone
O paternal city of the land of Thebes
and ancestral gods,
I am being led away. I delay no longer.
Look, magnates of Thebes,940
at the sole and last one of the royal line,
at what I suffer from what sort of men,
having piously rendered piety.

[Antigone is being led away by Creon's slaves but must remain within earshot of the elders' ode, since they address her directly. Creon remains on stage.]
Chorus of Theban Elders

Even Danaë's beauty endured exchanging the light of the heavens for chambers bound in bronze. Hidden in a tomb-like chamber, she was bent to the yoke. And yet, honored in birth, O child, child, she became keeper for the gold-streaming seed of Zeus. But the power of fate (whatever it may be) is terrible and wonderful. Neither wealth nor Ares, no tower, no dark ships beaten by the sea can escape it.

Yoked was Dryas' hot-headed son, King of Edonians, for his heart-stinging rage. Shut away at Dionysus' command in a rocky bondage. Thus his madness' flowering might, terrible and wonderful, trickles away. That one in madness touched the god with heart-stinging tongues and came to know him. He would stop the women taken by god and the fire of the god's holy Eu-oí-oí-oi (110) and anger the Muses who love the flute.

Beside the expanse of the twin seas' Dark Rocks, lie the shores of the Bosphorus . . . and Thracian Salmydessus where its neighbor Ares saw upon the two sons of Phineus an accursed wound of blindness dealt by his savage wife, a wound inflicting blindness upon orbs appealing for vengeance from eyes pierced by bloody hands and pointed shuttles. (112)

Wretchedly wasting away, they weep their wretched suffering, having birth from a mother ill-wed. The queen is the seed of the sons of Erechtheus, an ancient lineage, and in far-off caves she was reared amid paternal storms, daughter of Boreas, swift with the horses across the steep hills,
child of gods. But even over that one
the long-lived Fates wielded power, child.

[An old man, led by a boy, enters by the gangway from the city.]

Tiresias
Lords of Thebes, we come by a common road,
two seeing from one. For the blind,
this way by a guide is usual.990

Creon
What is new, aged Tiresias?

Tiresias
I shall inform you, and, for your part, obey the prophet.

Creon
I did not differ before from your purpose, did I?

Tiresias
No, and you steered the city on a straight course.

Creon
From experience I can bear witness to your aid.995

Tiresias
Now that you have come onto the razor's edge of chance, start thinking.

Creon
What is it? How I shudder at your voice.

Tiresias
You shall know when you have heard the marks of my craft.
Sitting at the ancient seat for watching birds, where lies my sanctuary for every bird, I hear an unknown sound of birds shrieking with a gadfly sinister and barbarous. And that they were tearing one another apart with murderous claws, I came to realize, for the whirling of wings was not without its own mark. Frightened, I immediately tested the burnt offerings on altars set fully ablaze, but from the sacrifices Hephaestus did not shine forth, but onto the ashes the juices oozing from the thigh pieces were melting.
and smoking and sputtering, and the bladders
were exploding gall into the air, and dripping
thigh bones were exposed from their enveloping fat.

Such things I learned from this boy,
prophecies withering away from rites bearing no marks,
for he is my guide as I am for others.

As for this situation, the city is sick from your thinking.
Absolutely all our altars and braziers
are filled by birds and dogs with the meat
of the unfortunate fallen son of Oedipus.

No longer do the gods accept prayers from us
at sacrifices or the flames from our thigh pieces,
nor do the birds scream cries that mark meaning clearly
since they are glutted on the fat of a slain man's blood.

Therefore, think about this, child. For men,
all of them, it is common to make mistakes.
Whenever he does make a mistake, that man is still not
foolish or unhappy who, fallen into evil,
applies a remedy and does not become immovable.

Stubborn self-will incurs a charge of stupidity.
No, yield to the dead, and do not goad
the deceased. What valor this-- to slay the dead again?

I have thought this out well and speak for
your good. Learning from someone speaking kindly
is very pleasant, if he speaks to your profit.

Creon

Elder, all of you, like bowmen at their target,
shoot arrows at this man. I am not without experience
of that prophetic craft of yours. By the tribe of those
of your ilk, I have been sold off like wares and loaded as cargo before.

Pursue your profits, sell electrum from Sardis,
if you wish, and the gold of India.
You will not hide that one with a tomb,
not even if Zeus's eagles want to seize
him for meat and carry him to the thrones of Zeus.

Not even fearing this pollution,
will I give him up for burying, for well I know that
none among men has the power to pollute gods.

They fall shameful falls, old man Tiresias, those of mortals
who are very clever, whenever they utter shameful
words nobly for the sake of profit.
Antigone6

Tiresias
Pheu,
does any man know, does he consider . . .

Creon
Just what? What old saw are you saying?

Tiresias
by how much the best of possessions is good counsel?1050

Creon
By as much, I suppose, as not to have sense is the greatest harm.

Tiresias
You certainly were full of this sickness.

Creon
I prefer not to speak evil of a prophet.

Tiresias
And yet, you do, when you say I prophecy falsely.

Creon
Yes, for the whole family of prophets is philos to silver.1055

Tiresias
And the family of absolute rulers holds disgraceful profits as philoi.

Creon
Do you know what you are saying you say of sovereigns?(118)

Tiresias
I do, since on my account you saved the city and have it now.

Creon
You are a skilled prophet but one who is philos to wrongdoing.

Tiresias
You will goad me to say in my breast that ought not be moved. 1060

Creon
Move them. Only do not do so by speaking for profit.
Tiresias
Do I seem to you to speak that way?

Creon
Know that you are not going to sell my purpose.

Tiresias
Know this well: you will no longer
finish many successive laps of the sun
in which you yourself will have repaid one
from your own loins, a corpse in return for corpses,
because you have cast one of those up here down there,
and while domiciling a living being in a tomb without honor,
you have one of those belonging to the lower gods up here,
a corpse without portion, without burial rites, without holiness.
In those things, neither you nor the gods above have
a share, but for this they are being violated by you.
For this reason, mutilators whose destruction comes afterwards,
lie in ambush for you, the Erinyes of Hades and the gods,
so that you may be caught in these same evils.
Consider whether I am saying this, silvered
in bribes, for the wearing away of not a long time
will reveal the laments for men, for women in your house.
All the cities are thrown into disorder by hostility
whose severed bodies either dogs have consecrated
or beasts or some winged bird, carrying
an unhallowed stench into the city of their hearths.
Such bolts, for you rile me, like an archer
I let loose in rage at your heart,
sure bolts whose heat you will not run out from under.
Boy, lead us home, so this one
may vent his rage on younger men
and learn to nourish a tongue calmer
and a mind in his breast better than he now bears.

[Exit Tiresias, led by the boy.]

Coryphaeus
Lord, the man is gone after uttering terrible prophecies.
We know, from the time I put on
white hair from black,
that he never cried out falsehood to a city.
Antigone

Creon
I know this myself, and I shutter in my breast.1095
For to yield is terrible, but to resist and
smite my rage with ruin present a terrible alternative.

Coryphaeus
There is need, son of Menoeceus, to take good counsel.

Creon
What ought I to do, then? Tell me. I will obey.

Coryphaeus
Go, release the maiden from the cavernous room,1100
and build a tomb for the one lying forth.

Creon
You advise this? It is best for me to yield?

Coryphaeus
As quickly as possible, lord, the gods' swift-footed
Harms cut short those who think badly.\(^{123}\)

Creon
Ah me! it is hard, but I abandon my heart to do it. 1105
A vain battle must not be waged against necessity.

Coryphaeus
Go, and do these things. Do not entrust them to others.

Creon
I should go just as I am. Come, come, servants,
both those present and those not present. Take up
axes, and rush to the place in plain sight.\(^{124}\) 1110
Since my opinion turns around in this direction,
I bound her myself, and I will go there and release her.
For I fear that it is best for one to end
his life preserving the established customs.

NEXT
Chorus of Theban Elders

Thou of Many Names, pride and joy of the Cadmeian bride,(125)
son of loud-thundering Zeus
who haunt renowned
Italy and hold sway
in the folds of Eleusinian Deo(126) that are open to all, O Bacchus,
dwelling in the mother-city of the Bacchae
beside the liquid
stream of Ismenus and beside
the seeding ground of the savage dragon.(127)

Thee the light shimmering through smoky flames
has seen about the twin peaks(128)
of rock where Corycian
Nymphs, your Bacchae, wend.
Thee, the stream of Castalia has seen.1130
And thee, the ivied slopes
of Nysean mountains and shores
green with grape clusters escort
amid divine strains of Eu-oi-oi-oi-oi
resounding as you visit1135
the concourses of Thebes.(129)

This city thou honorest
as preeminent above all cities
and thy mother taken by lightning.
Now, when the city and its people1140
are held fast under violent sickness,
come with cleansing foot across the slopes
of Parnassus'(130) or moaning straits.1145

Io, io, leader of the chorus
of stars breathing fire, surveyor
of voices in the night,
boy son of Zeus, appear,
O Lord, amidst thy Thyiads(131) who accompany you, and in maddened frenzy,
dance the night for you, dispenser of good Iacchos.(132)
[A man enters from the country.]

**Messenger**
Neighbors of the houses of Cadmus and Amphion,(133) 1155
no life among men exists that I would
either praise or blame as fixed once for all.
Chance sets upright, and chance dashes down
the lucky and the unlucky, always.
Mortals have no prophet at all for what is established.1160
For Creon was enviable in my opinion, once.
He saved this land of Cadmus from its enemies.
He received sole rule omnipotent over the land
and guided it straight, flourishing in the
seed of children born. And now everything is lost.1165
Whenever men forfeit their pleasures, I do not regard
such a man as alive, but I consider him a living corpse.
Be very wealthy in your household, if you wish, and live
the style of absolute rulers, but should the enjoyment of these
depart, what is left, compared to pleasure,1170
I would not buy from a man for a shadow of smoke.

**Coryphaeus**
What misery this for the kings do you come bringing?

**Messenger**
They are dead. The living are responsible for them dying.

**Coryphaeus**
Who is the murderer? Who is laid forth? Tell us.

**Messenger**
Haemon is dead, his blood drawn by a hand of his own . . .(134)1175

**Coryphaeus**
his father's or the hand of his own?

**Messenger**
He himself by his own hand in anger at his father for the murder.

**Coryphaeus**
O prophet, how truly you fulfilled your word.
Messenger
Since this is the situation, it remains to plan for the rest.

[A woman enters from the house.]

Coryphaeus
Here I see wretched Eurydice close by, wife of Creon. She comes from the house, because she has heard about her son, or by chance.

Eurydice
All my townsmen, I heard your words as I was approaching the door to go and address the goddess Pallas with my prayers. I was just loosening the bolts of the door, when the sound of misfortune for my house struck my ears. I fell backward in fear into my servants' arms and fainted. But say again what the report was, for I will listen as one not inexperienced in evils.

Messenger
I will tell you, philê mistress. I was there. I will not omit any word of the truth. Why would I comfort you with words for which later I will be revealed a liar? The truth is always the right thing. I followed your husband as his guide to the edge of the plain where was lying, unpitied and rent by dogs Polyneices' body, still. We asked the Goddess of the Road and Plouton to maintain a kindly disposition. We bathed him with purifying bath and burned what was left on newly plucked branches. A lofty crowned mound of his own earth, we heaped upon him, and, afterwards, we left for the maiden's hollow bridal chamber of Hades with its bedding of stone. From afar someone hears high-pitched laments of a voice near the bride's chamber unhallowed by funeral rites. He came and reported to his master. Senseless marks of a cry of suffering came over Creon as he drew nearer. Crying out, he sent forth a mournful word. "O miserable me, am I a prophet? Am I going
the most unfortunate road of those traveled before?
My son's voice touches(138) me. But, servants,
go quickly closer, and stand near the tomb,1215
and look, entering at the gap torn in the rocks of the mound
as far as the mouth itself, and see if I am hearing
Haemon's voice, or I am deceived by the gods."
At the command of our despairing master,
we began looking, and in the furthest part of the tomb,1220
we saw her hanging by the neck,
suspended by a noose of fine linen,
and him lying beside her, his arms about her waist,
bewailing the destruction of his nuptial bed departed below,
his father's deeds, and wretched marriage bed.1225
When Creon sees him, crying out dreadfully, he goes
inside toward him, and wailing out loud, he calls out:
"Wretched one, what have you done? What were
you thinking? By what disaster were you destroyed?
Come out, my child, I beg you on my knees."1230
With savage eyes descrying him, the boy,
spitting at his face and offering no reply,
draws his two-edged sword, but he fell short
of his father bolting in flight. Then, doomed
and furious with himself, just as he was, he stretched1235
out and drove his sword half-way into his side. Still
conscious, he enfolds the girl in his faint embrace.
He was panting and streaming a swift flow
of blood upon her white cheek.
He lies, corpse around corpse.1240
The wretched one received marriage rites in Hades' house,

[At some point before the Messenger concludes his report, Eurydice withdraws into the house.]

having shown among men how much lack of counsel
is the greatest evil that clings to a man.

**Coryphaeus**
What do you suppose about that? The woman is gone again,
before she said a word, good or bad.1245

**Messenger**
I, too, am surprised, but I feed on the hopes
that, on hearing of her child's pains, she does not think
wailing before the city proper, but inside beneath her roof,
she will set forth the grief of her own for her slaves to lament. She is not inexperienced in discretion so as to make a mistake.1250

*Coryphaeus*

I do not know. To me too much silence seems as heavy as much vain shouting.

*Messenger*

Well, we will know if, as we fear, she is concealing something, repressed secretly in her distraught heart, after I have entered the house. You are right. 1255
There is a heaviness even in too much silence.

[Exit Messenger. During his last lines, Creon enters silently, holding onto the body of his son Haemon which is carried by his servants.]

*Coryphaeus*

Here comes the lord himself, holding in his hands a remarkable memorial, if it is meet to say, not of another's ruin but of a mistake that is all his own.1260

*Creon*

Iō, iō, the mistakes of thoughtless minds, stubborn, deadly mistakes, iō, you who look upon kinsmen slayers and the slain.

Ah me! the unhappy counsels among my counsels.1265

O boy, new to life with a new kind of death, aiai, aiai, you died, and you have departed because of my bad counsels, not yours.

*Coryphaeus*

Ah me! how you seem to see justice late.1270

*Creon*

Ah me!
I have learned in misery. Upon my head a god, at that time holding a heavy weight, struck me and hurled me in savage ways, Ah me! overturning and trampling my joy.1275
pheu, pheu, the painful pains of mortals.

[Enter the Messenger from the house.]

**Messenger**
Master, you are holding evils, and you have others laid in store. Some you carry in your hands. Others inside the house you are about to come and see over there. 1280

**Creon**
What worse evil is yet to come from evils?

**Messenger**
The woman is dead, the all-mother of the corpse, the wretched one, just now by newly cut blows.

**Creon**
Iô, iô, haven of Hades hard to atone, why me, why are you destroying me? 1285
O you who have escorted to me the sufferings of ill-tidings, what word are you crying out? Aiai, you have done away with a dead man. What are you saying, boy? What news are telling me? Aiai, aiai, 1290 slaughter on top of destruction-- a woman's death besetting me on both sides?

**Messenger**
You may see, for she is no longer in the inner recesses of the house.

[The central doors of the stage building move inward (1186). The *ekkyklêma*, a low, wooden platform mounted on wheels, is pushed outward. On it is displayed the corpse of Eurydice lying next to an altar (1301). A sword is visible piercing her side.]

**Creon**
Ah me! in my misery I am looking at a second evil. 1295
What, what fate still awaits me? I hold my child just now in my hands, wretched me, and I look further at the corpse before me. Pheu, pheu, woeful mother, pheu, child.
Messenger
†Around the sharply whetted knife at the altar,†

she relaxes her eyebrows into darkness, after lamenting
the empty bed of Megareus who died before
and again the bed of this one and lastly, after conjuring
evil doings for you, child-killer.

Creon
Aiai, aiai,
I flutter with fear. Why has someone not
struck me straight in the chest with a two-edged sword?
I am miserable, aiai,
and I am soaked in miserable woe.

Messenger
Yes, you were denounced by the dead woman with
responsibility for the deaths, that one and this one both.

Creon
In what way did she release herself in bloodshed?

Messenger
By striking herself with her own hand down to the liver when
she heard of the boy's sharply lamented suffering.

Creon
Ah me! me, these things will never be fit upon another
of mortals and be free of my responsibility.
Yes, I killed, I killed you, O pitiable me,
I, the report is true. iô, servants,
lead me away as quickly as you can, lead me from under foot,
who exists no more than a nonentity.

Coryphaeus
You give profitable advice, if any profit exists amid evils,
for the evils at one's feet are best when very brief.

Creon
Let it come. Let it come.
Let the fairest of destines appear,
the one that brings to me my final day,
the supreme destiny. Let it come. Let it come,
that I no longer see another day.

**Coryphaeus**

These things lie in the future. It is necessary to do some of what lies before. What lies in the future is the care of those who ought to care. 1335

**Creon**

No, what I lust for, I have prayed for.

**Coryphaeus**

Then, do not pray for anything. There is no escape for mortals from misfortune that is fated.

**Creon**

Please, lead a useless man out from under foot, who killed you, boy, not willingly, 1340 and you, too, this woman. O me, wretched me, I do not know toward which to look or where to lean for support. Everything in my hands is awry, while upon my head 1345 fate unbearable leaped.

[Creon is led into the house. The *ekkyklêma* is drawn inside, and the messenger and the slaves carrying Haemon's body enter the house.]

**Chorus of Theban Elders**

By far is having sense the first part of happiness. One must not act impiously toward what pertains to gods. Big words 1350 of boasting men, paid for by big blows, teach having sense in old age.

Before the festival, the Council had compiled a list of names from each of the ten tribes of citizens. These names were placed in ten urns, sealed and stored on the Acropolis. At the beginning of the festival, the urns were set up in the theater, and the magistrate drew the name of one man from each urn. These ten men, now designated as judges of the contest, were required by law to select a winning poet. With the close of the final satyr play, it was time for them to vote. The judges, weathering the advice shouted down from the slope of the Acropolis and mindful of their oath of impartiality, marked their tablets and deposited them in a jar. The magistrate solemnly drew five and, after reading the names, whispered to the herald. The latter, whose voice speaks for the community, proclaimed the victor.
Notes


3. For this approach to Greek tragedy, see Simon Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1986) 1-32.


5. The approach that attempts to draw stage-directions and clues from the script as a means of imaging the play's performance was first elaborated by Oliver Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* (Berkeley 1978).


7. For the date of the first performance of the *Antigone*, we have followed the argument of R.G. Lewis, "An Alternative Date for Sophocles' Antigone," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 29 (1988) 35-50. Lewis places the date of the first performance in Elaphebolion (roughly March) of 438 B.C. For 442 B.C. as the date of *Antigone*, see Brown (above, note 2) 1-2, and for 441 B.C., see Jebb (above, note 2) xlii-liv.


9. For a discussion of the audience for the tragedies and comedies, see Jeffrey Henderson, "Women and..."

10. The actors were dressed in ankle-length robes brightly colored with patterns, soft boots of leather reaching to the calf, and a mask. The mask, constructed by a craftsman from linen, portrayed with realistic features the face and head of a young woman. The audience may have surmised that one of them is Antigone, since they knew the title of the play.

11. Antigone's name means "Against the Family." "Against" carries both the sense of "close to" and "opposed to." When Antigone first speaks she is yet without a name but her language stresses closeness. She addresses her sister with a hyperbole whose overstatement of filial closeness is further enhanced by her use of the dual number. Beside the singular and plural, Greek has a set of inflections for expressing pairs, most often, common pairs like two oxen or two eyes. Antigone encloses Ismene with language that makes them such a natural pair, and Ismene acknowledges this with dual forms of her own.

12. The daggers indicate that Greek text is corrupt and cannot be reconstructed. Translation of daggered words is approximate.

13. Antigone introduces military imagery with her first words. The generalship was an elected office among the Athenians and had both military and political importance. At the time of the *Antigone*, it was the office held by, among others, Pericles. For the imagery of *Antigone*, see Robert F. Goheen, *The Imagery of Sophocles' Antigone: A Study of Poetic Language* (Princeton 1951).

14. The Greek has also been translated as "in the present night." This version places the action of the prologue during the night when the Argives were retreating.

15. Dramatic action depends upon two pieces of information. Antigone says: "I kept fetching" or "I kept calling" Ismene (19) as opposed to "I called" her. Secondly, unlike Ismene who has been in the house (8-9), Antigone knows what has happened in the city. Although how she learned of Creon's decree is left unsaid, the difference is not incidental. The theater of Dionysus had no curtain to open and show Antigone before the house. Antigone and Ismene either enter together from the house or Antigone comes in silently by one of the gangways, that is, the path to and from city, calls out to the house, and Ismene enters from the house. In the first instance, Antigone's roaming in the city is left to dialogue; in the second, it is represented visually before the audience.

16. "Deeply blue" attempts the two connotations of the Greek: the color purple, and a disturbance of the sea or mind.

17. *Taphos* (tomb) also designates "funeral rites," "funeral feast," and "the act of performing funeral rites." All of these meanings are present, with "tomb" being foremost because of the idea of "covering."

18. After Oedipus' death, Eteocles and Polynices agree that they will each rule Thebes as its king in
alternate years. During his time in exile, Polynieces marries Argeia, daughter of Adrastus, king of Argos. When after a year Eteocles refused to abdicate, Adrastus and Polynieces lead an army of Argives against Thebes. The brothers meet at the seventh of Thebes' seven gates, Polynieces on the outside and Eteocles on the inside of the city; they slay one another. For the myths of the house of Laius, Oedipus, Eteocles, and Polynieces, see Apollodorus, *The Library* 3.5.7-6.8, in Michael Simpson, *Gods and Heroes of the Greeks: The Library of Apollodorus* (Amherst 1976) 143-48.

19. Public stoning, carried out by all the people, was an execution reserved for transgressions that injured the whole community. As such, it could not be murder.

20. "Noble birth" and "base born from good stock" are concepts that assert male values of ethical and moral superiority based on birth.


22. Antigone's military image uses the common words for being captured and for handing a city or allies over to the enemy.

23. At this point, Antigone and Ismene no longer speak to one another in the dual.

24. The military image evokes the land warfare of the day, essentially a pitched battle fought by men, called hoplites after their shield (*hoplon*) at close quarters on level ground in a single melee. For hoplite warfare, see Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (Oxford 1989).

25. The usual translation her words, "having criminally done holy things," implies criticism of Antigone's decision to perform rites for Polynieces. Antigone's language allows two meanings: first, that she will do every thing holy and secondly that she will do holy things in a criminal way. Antigone must the mean the first, since she cannot be criticizing her own action, but Sophocles allows the audience to hear both meanings simultaneously.

26. Antigone proposes to conduct a cremation burial of the sort provided Elpenor:

   Then, I sent my companions to Circe's house
to bring back Elpenor's dead body.
We quickly cut wood, and where the shore jutted out
furthest, we performed his burial rites, grieving and
shedding tears profusely. But after the body and its armor
were burned, we heaped a mound and, dragging a grave stele, we affixed on top of the mound a handy oar (Homer, *Odyssey* 12.9-15).

A pit is dug as deep as six feet, and its bottom furrowed with channels for ventilation. Combustible material is placed into the pit, and bier is laid on top upon which rest the corpse. After the fire reduced the body to dust, a large mound of earth is heaped over the pit and the offering ditches.  

27. The image intimates that the sisters are now navigating the ship of their fortunes on different voyages.

28. Antigone implies that she will be dead.


30. The river Dirce was on the west side of Thebes.

31. Helios is imagined as the driver of his four-horse sun chariot in pursuit of the fleeing Argives. The image of light shining off the horses' bridles is uncertain.

32. "Quarrels" (*neikeôn*) plays on the name Polyneices (He of Much Strife or Many Quarrels).

33. The "eagle" with "snow white wings" represents the Argives as the "dragon," the Thebans. Warriors are commonly compared to animals in Homer, while similes of birds embellish the attacks of his warriors.

34. One Argive used by synecdoche for all the Argives, the "them" of line 128.

35. Hephaestus, god of fire, is synonymous with his element, but other associations may be present. Hephaestus made Harmonia a necklace for her wedding with Cadmus (Apollodorus, *The Library* 3.4.2). Polyneices obtains the necklace and, with it, bribes Amphiareus' wife Eriphyle to persuade her husband to join the expedition against Thebes. Amphiareus refused Adrastus since, being a seer, he foresaw that all except Adrastus would perish.

36. Ares, divine embodiment of the berserker spirit of war, is the father of the dragon that Cadmus slew in the foundation myth of Thebes. Cadmus sowed the beast's teeth in the ground, and there sprung up armed men. These fell to slaying one another, and the five remaining Spartoi (Sown Men) became the ancestors of the Theban nobility. Cadmus atoned for the dragon's slaughter by serving Ares for eight years (Apollodorus, *The Library* 3.4.1-2). Sophocles uses dragon metaphorically for Thebans.

37. The man is usually identified as Capaneus, one of the seven leaders of the Argive king Adrastos' army, who had sworn an oath to lay waste Thebes with or without the consent of the gods (Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* 423-31; Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 1172-86 and *Suppliant Women* 496-99).
38. The finishing lines referred to here are ropes or groves in a stone slab that mark the line where the runners line up evenly at the beginning of a race and to which they return.

39. The elders describe the man as a reveler enthused by the god Bacchus, that is, Dionysus. Sophocles may be using the stem *bakch-* to denote madness but a secondary reference to Dionysus seems unavoidable. Bacchus is a name, perhaps Lydian in origin, for Dionysus, and so his female worshipers who were aroused by the god to an ecstatic state, were called Bacchae (female Bacchuses) and Maenads (woman maddened with Dionysus).

40. In a four-horse racing team, the outer horses drew by ropes (traces), while the inner ones were harnessed to the yoke or collar. The chariot went down the right side of the course, turned around a post, and came back on the left. In the turn, the driver spurred the outer or right horse, at the same time slackening its reins. He then left it to the horse to resist centrifugal forces and pull the chariot around through the turn. See Homer, *Iliad* 23.334-43 for a description. The horse became a byword for a trusty helper in a time of need.

41. "Zeus Turner" is the god in his capacity as the maker of a "turning." When one side or part of a side in the clash of lines could no longer withstand the pressure of the pushing, it could weakened and collapse into rout--the moment of "turning."

42. A word meaning "ruler" is commonly inserted in the lacuna.

43. The Coryphaeus' verb derives from the same verb as the *prothesis*, the "laying forth" or wake, thus alluding to the Creon's denial of this ritual for Polyneices.

44. That is, the grandsons of Laius and sons of Oedipus, Eteocles and Polyneices.

45. By the fourth century, nearness of kin (*anchisteia*) had been defined by law to children of first cousins. W.K. Lacey (*The Family in Classical Greece* [London 1968] 28-29) describes this kinship group as "the group which was entitled, in due order, to succeed to vacant estates, and had legal duties and responsibilities in case of death within the group, especially if it was death by violence; the *anchisteia* was obliged to bury its own dead, and to seek vengeance, or at least purification, for the violent death of any of its members."

46. The Greek denotes a living body, not a corpse.

47. The Greek also denotes "custom." Since Creon has been making "laws" (177; 449), "law" would be what he would have heard, but "custom" is always present. "To use every custom" expresses a very different sentiment, one the Coryphaeus implies, it seems, by his qualifying "I suppose."

48. The Greek implies a "protector" or "guardian" for the corpse as well as watchmen to be "lookouts" for
anyone who invades the domain he has asserted over Polyneices' corpse.

49. The reader must await the Watchman's words, but the spectator can see that the man stops often and turns around as if to leave, only to resume his progress toward the house.

50. The manuscripts have a verb that means "you take aim," a military image like that of the following verb. We have adopted an emendation that maintains the imagery but leads more smoothly into the second verb. The Watchman, as it were, returns to ranks and surrounds himself with defenders.

51. With the participle sêmanôn (to announce), Sophocles keeps the sound of the absence sêma (marker by with a grave, a mound) upon the ears of those in the audience. We have tried to indicate the presence of a word with the root sêm- by the English "mark."

52. Also: "skin" or "body."

53. The Greek pausai combines the explosive sound of the first syllable, "pow!" with the hissing sibilants of the second, "ssssssai," a far more violent sound than the English "stop." The effect surely was intensified by the Greek aversion to the sound of "s."

54. The Greek denotes both an established usage or custom and the current coin, that is, money.

55. Hades is used for both the god and the place.

56. Creon threatens the watchmen with being hung from a pole and left to die.

57. The Watchman's beeline for the gangway and the refuge in the countryside away from Creon visualizes his resolve. Thus the scene begins and ends on the spectacle of a single figure traversing the cavea of the audience.

58. That is, mules "who are better than oxen for dragging the jointed plow through the deep fallow (Homer, Iliad 10.352-53).

59. Namely, the wild goat.

60. In a mirroring effect, Sophocles has this scene reflect or draw the audience back to the earlier one involving the watchman. In this way, he could use the similarities, both visually and verbally, to highlight the differences between the scenes. For mirroring scenes, see Taplin (above, note 5) 122-39.

61. "Heaven" is the seat of the gods. Also possible is "a pain reaching to heaven." The Greek does not suggest "heavenly" in the sense of "delightful" or "beatific."
62. Certainty is thwarted by syntactical ambiguity that allows at least a second reading: "an orphaned bed of nestlings' empty bedding."

63. The clause may also be translated: "when she sees a corpse bare," because it is not certain whether the adjective is attributive or predicate. The former indicates that the body is bare, while the latter implies that it was covered and has been laid bare.

64. We have changed our usual translation of the Greek verb from "do" to "act" in order to be able to mimic the absence of a direct object and so maintain the ambiguity of the original. Also in line 483.

65. Zeus Herkeios (Zeus of the Fence) protected the boundary of every Greek household and the possessions enclosed within. His altar stood in the courtyard where the master of the house (kyrios) conducted sacrifice and the "rite of sprinkling" of family, slaves and guests with water, a ritual binding those present to one another. Creon may be imagined as having conducted this rite with Antigone and Ismene many times.

66. Cadmus is the founder of Thebes, and so Thebans are also called Cadmeians.

67. The image is that of a dog putting its tail between its legs in fear.

68. Antigone's word is nomos. See above, note 47.

69. A common but mistaken translation is: "My nature is to join in love, not hate."

70. Ismene is surrounded by female slaves, companions of the women's quarters. They are not mentioned in the script, but when Creon orders Antigone and Ismene to be led inside the house, he addresses female slaves (578), so they must have escorted her outside.

71. Antigone's language allows two meanings: Ismene is an advocate for the living Creon and a mourner for the dead Creon. In each case she gives Creon her voice in aid.

72. Ismene returns for the last time to the dual number, implying that Antigone and she are once again an inseparable pair.

73. That is, Antigone, bride of Haemon whose name is formed from the root haim- (blood).

74. The verb translated "fit" denotes both "joining together" and "arranging a marriage."

75. When Creon asserts his mastery over the house of Labdacus, he assumes its history, and the house itself becomes a silent player in the drama.
76. Storms blowing from Thrace were in the northern Aegean. Athenians perhaps associated the storms with the primitive and warlike peoples that inhabited Thrace.

77. Labdacus' sons are Laius and his son Oedipus. The assonance of p and n substitutes for that of the Greek in pi and mu.

78. Many editors accept the emendation of "knife" for "dust" of the manuscripts.

79. An Erinys is a divine being who avenges serious wrongs, including murder and perjury. She enforces the order of nature, may embody a curse, and brings mental blindness and ruin upon the perpetrator of wrongdoing or a descendant.

80. The archaism imitates Sophocles' use of a word from epic that is does not occur elsewhere in extant tragedy.

81. The actor playing Haemon must also be playing either Antigone or Ismene. If Antigone, the similarity of voice marks the harmony Ismene claimed for her and Haemon, while the voice of the Ismene actor would bring back the voice that defended Haemon to appeal to Creon in the person of Haemon himself. The actor wears the unbearded mask of a youth of some eighteen years. By contrast, Creon wears the bearded mask of the mature man.

82. Sophocles' language allows Creon to receive what Haemon says differently as a declaration of his loyalty to his father: "You guide things aright, since you have good judgments that I will follow."

83. Zeus of the Fence (above, note 65) oversees the sacredness of kin-blood and so may be referred to in this capacity as Zeus of Kin Blood.

84. Creon alludes to the oath of allegiance that every citizen ephebe took, which affirmed in part: "I will not desert the "stand-beside" whomever I may stand beside." In a formation of hoplites, the safety of all depended upon the cohesion of the line of men and shields. The straps on the hoplite's shield were so arranged that half of the shield extended beyond the man's left side, leaving his right side exposed. The man on his left used this part to defend his right side, while the man himself looked to the shield of the man on his right to protect his right side. Each man had to stand beside his fellow.

85. Some editors have challenged the authenticity of this line.

86. The military image of the scout is appropriate to Haemon's youth (718; 728) and to his status as an ephebe, someone who fought in ways opposite to those of a hoplite. The latter fought in the daylight in close quarters with the enemy. The epebe fought by ruse and at night along the borders of the domain.

87. The image seems to be taken from a writing tablet.
88. The "foot sheet" was one of the two ropes attached to the lower corners of the sail.

89. Literally, "it is by far older," and so, with the wisdom afforded the elders, "best," a compliment to Creon for being older and therefore "wiser."

90. "Ally" connotes an underling. Since the allies in the alliance led by Athenians, for the most, paid tribute to the Athenians, they were not considered as equals.

91. The translation derives from an emendation; that of manuscript is: "What threat is there to speak against empty judgments?"

92. Creon's language evokes the prothesis that he has denied Polyneices.

93. Translators of Antigone have removed Creon after line 780, finding his presence intolerable while Antigone is mourning for herself. Those very emotions argue for keeping Creon on stage so that the audience may experience the same feelings of violation.

94. The name of one of the rivers in the underworld.

95. This line, depending on the pronunciation of the first word, may also be translated as a question: "Are you not departing for the recesses of the dead with renown and praise?", which evokes an affirmative answer.

96. As a Phrygian or Lydian, Niobe is called a guest in the house of her Theban husband, Amphion. She boasted of having more children than the goddess Leto. The latter took affront, and her children Apollo and Artemis slew all or all but two of Niobe's. Niobe returned to her father Tantalus at Sipylus in Lydia where, after praying to Zeus, she transformed into a stone. From the stone, tears flow night and day (Apollodorus, Library 3.5.6). Niobe, usually considered a mortal woman, is treated by Sophocles as not merely of divine lineage but a goddess herself.

97. In the image, overhanging cliffs allude to Niobe's eyebrows and valleys to her throat or bosom.

98. Antigone reproaches the elders with hubris, behavior that reduces her to an object that may be treated as they wish without fear of penalty for violating her rights.

99. The archaic English is meant to reproduce the effect of strangeness in Antigone's word, one from epic poetry in the Aeolic dialect.

100. Antigone's word may also be translated "customs."

101. A metic is an alien who has changed (met-) his residency (oik- "house") and lives in Athens with a status above other foreigners but with military and financial obligations. As such, he is a citizen of neither
his native *polis* nor that of the Athenians.

102. The prize that Oedipus won in the contest with the Sphinx is marriage with the dead King Laius' wife, Jocasta, and the throne of Thebes as well as the "suffering" that accrued from his victory.

103. The Greek allows that the tomb is both ever-guarding Antigone and ever-guarded by Antigone.

104. Persephone, wife of Hades, has many names.

105. Editors have often doubted that Sophocles wrote lines 904-20. Aristotle in his *On Rhetoric* (3.16.9) quotes lines 911 and 912 and appears to have the full passage in his text of the play. The ideas expressed are similar to those found in Herodotus' *History* (3.119). The Persian, King Darius, granted the wife of a traitor whose family the king had condemned to death for treason the life of one family member. She chose her brother, justifying her choice as follows: "There would be another husband for me, if the deity wishes, and other children if I lose these, but with my father and mother no longer living, there would never be another brother."

106. Also "custom."

107. The "he" is not Creon but Hades, the Unseen One, who is claiming his bride. In the marriage rite, the groom took his bride by the wrist in a symbolic abduction of the woman into marriage.

108. When Acrisius asked the oracle about the birth of male children, the god said that his daughter, Danaë, would give birth to a son who would kill him. Fearing this, Acrisius built a bronze bridal chamber beneath the earth where he guarded her. Zeus, changed himself into gold and, flowing through the roof into Danaë's womb, had intercourse with her (Apollodorus, *The Library* 2.4.1).

109. Lycurgus acted with outrage (*hybris*) toward Dionysus and expelled him. Dionysus maddened Lycurgus, and the latter struck his son with an axe, imagining that he was pruning a vine branch, and killed him. After he had cut off his son's extremities, he came to his senses. The land, however, remained barren. The god declared that the land would bear fruit if Lycurgus were killed. The Edonians led him to Mt. Pangeum and bound him, and there by the will of Dionysus, Lycurgus was torn apart by horses (Apollodorus, *The Library* 3.5.1). In other versions, he is driven mad, attempts incest with his mother, cuts off his foot, and is imprisoned in a cave. Sophocles' audience, however, may have received his antistrophe through the version of the myth presented by Aeschylus' *Edonians*. This would imply that after Lycurgus' madness has seeped away during his stay in the cave, he realizes his mistake in not admitting Dionysus as a god and becomes his servant and prophet.

110. 

111. The Dark Rocks are the islands which the Greeks called the Symplegades (Clashing Rocks) or the Wandering Rocks or the Blue Rocks. The city Salmydessus was on south-west shore of the Black Sea.
Thrace was deemed a savage and warlike land, and so Ares is an appropriate god for its peoples.

112. Boreas, the North Wind, carried off Oreithyia, daughter of Erechtheus, king of Attica, and had children by her, among them, Cleopatra. Phineus married Cleopatra and had sons, Plexippus and Pandion. After Cleopatra's death, Phineus married Idaea, daughter of Dardanus. Idaea alleges falsely that she was raped by Phineus' sons, and Phineus, believing her, blinds both of them (Apollodorus, *The Library* 3.15.3). Sophocles attributes the blinding to Idaea herself.

113. Tiresias may be wearing a netlike mesh of wool that would identify him as a prophet. The famous prophet of Thebes is played by either the actor playing Antigone and Haemon or by the one playing Ismene and Haemon. The choice seems to focus on whose voice Sophocles wanted to reinforce with the authority of the gods. Being led by a boy is theater for Tiresias' blindness and his willingness to be guided by someone younger.

114. Creon's recognition of Tiresias' aid also yields the rueful: "I suffered your aid."

115. The geographer Pausanias (2nd century A.D.) saw "Tiresias' bird observatory" on the acropolis at Thebes (*Description of Greece* 9.16.1).

116. The gadfly, an tormenting insect and metaphor for frenzy, makes incomprehensible twittering sounds like those of barbarous, that is, non-Greek languages.

117. Electrum, gold mixed with twenty-percent or more of silver, was mined on Tmolus in Lydia, the mountain range south of Sardis. The latter was the seat of the Lydian monarchy.

118. "Sovereign" for Sophocles' word borrowed from the Thassalian dialect.

119. "They" may denote the gods below who are deprived of one of their own or the gods above who are offended by the unburied corpse or both.

120. Another translation is possible: "laments of men, of women."

121. These cities are those in Argos which sent men with Adrastus and whose hearths now are polluted with human carrion.

122. Lines 1080-83 have been considered spurious, since Sophocles does not speak elsewhere of burial being denied the Argives. Sophoclean authorship of the lines is supported by the inclusion of his *Antigone* in mythmaking about Thebes and Theban impiety toward the Argives, for which see Euripides' *Suppliant Women*.

123. These personified deities recall the Erinyes of Hades and the gods (1075). Their name derives from a verb meaning "to stop" or "to hinder."
124. "Those present and those not present," like "to move heaven and earth," is a polar expression for every one and means to make every effort possible. The axes are the kind used to split wood.

125. Zeus impregnates Cadmus' mortal daughter Semele with Dionysus. His wife, Hera, persuades Semele to bind Zeus by a promise to appear before her as he does when he is wooing Hera. Zeus appears before Semele who she is destroyed by his lightning and thunder bolts. Zeus snatches the six-month child from Semele's womb and sews it into his thigh. In due time, a mortal woman's child is born of the male god Zeus and is himself a god (Apollodorus, Library 3.5.3).

126. That is, Demeter whose mysteries at Eleusis, a town and district of Attica northwest of Athens, were open to everyone, with the ability to speak Greek being the sole requirement for initiation.

127. The Ismenus river was on the east side of Thebes. The sowing ground of the dragon is the field where the dragon lived and Cadmus sewed its teeth after killing it.

128. The Phaedriades or Shining Rocks loom over the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. Dionysus' rites were celebrated on the side of Mt. Parnassus above the Phaedriades.

129. These nymphs haunt the Corycian cave on Mt. Parnassus. The stream flows from a fissure in the cliffs above Delphi. The mountain may be Mt. Nysa in Euboea, a center of Dionysus' worship.

130. The name was usually confined to that part of the Pindus mountain range extending a few miles north of Delphi.

131. That is, Bacchae.

132. A local Eleusinian and Athenian name for Dionysus.

133. Cadmus founded Thebes, and Amphion with his brother Zethus enclosed the city with its first wall (Apollodorus, The Library 3.4.1; 3.5.5). Both were regarded as founders of the city.

134. The Messenger's word denotes both one's own and a kinsman's hand and creates an ambiguity that we attempt by having the Coryphaeus' request for clarification come in the form of an interruption.

135. Eurydice can be played by the Antigone or Ismene actor. Her name means "Wide Justice." The advantage of the Antigone actor would be that this casting in a small measure grants Antigone the revenge she seeks in her final words.

136. Pallas ("maiden") is a title for Athena who was the goddess of the city and its citadel throughout Greece. It is Athene as "defender of the city" and as Pallas who denies the prayers of the Trojan women to protect their city, its wives and infant children (Homer, Iliad 6.305-11).
137. Hecate, an ancient goddess of the earth, wielded magical powers and haunted crossroads, especially where a byway met a main road. She was believed to encounter and terrify travelers. According to Plato in *Cratylus* (304 a), people were led by their fears to call Hades (The Unseen One) by the euphemism, Pluton or Wealth that comes from the earth. Polyneices' corpse is now part of the wealth owed Pluton.

138. Haemon's voice touches Creon because, as Creon's verb implies, it belongs to someone he loves.

139. For practical reasons, the body was probably a mannequin. The effort of carrying even a model and the restrictions on the actor's movements in the episode, however, sufficiently rule out his carrying a body throughout the scene. Creon must, then, be holding onto the body borne by his slaves.

140. Sophocles is playing on the two senses of "new," namely, "young" and "unheard of, strange."

141. The image characterizes Creon as a driver of a chariot who has been dealt a blow, and his chariot has careened off its course into savagery.

142. In *Prometheus Bound* (90), Aeschylus uses the same word for Ge, Earth, the true mother of everything.

143. The messenger is a slave.

144. The altar is that of Zeus of the Courtyard (above, note 65) in the courtyard of the house.

145. Sophocles does not say how Megareus, other son of Creon and Eurydice, died, but he implies that Creon was involved. According to Apollodorus (*The Library* 3.6.7), Tiresias declared that the Thebans would be victorious over the Argives if Creon's son Menoeceus (as he is called elsewhere) offered himself as a sacrificial victim. When Menoeceus heard the prophecy, he slew himself before the city's gates.

146. "Child-killer" seems to denote both of Eurydice's children, Megareus and Haemon.

147. Sophocles uses a technical term of the lawcourt for announcing formally the intention to initiate a prosecution for perjury against a witness at a trial. The bride and groom in an Athenian marriage did not exchange vows.