

# ANTIGONE BY SOPHOCLES

SCENE 4, ODE 4, SCENE 5, PAEAN AND EXODOS

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BIOGRAPHICAL, CULTURAL, AND  
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

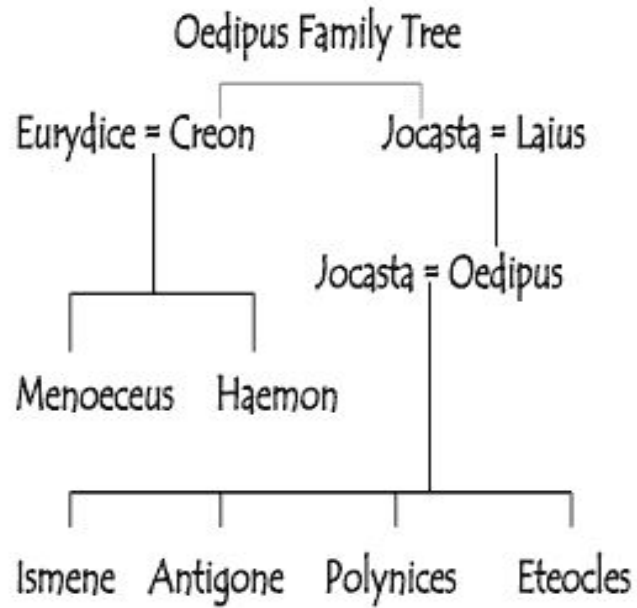
# THE GREEK THEATER

- Sophocles was one of the prominent figures in Greek theater.
- Plays were performed in outdoor areas.
- There were a limited number of actors and a chorus.<sup>6</sup>
- Antigone was mostly likely performed in the same fashion.

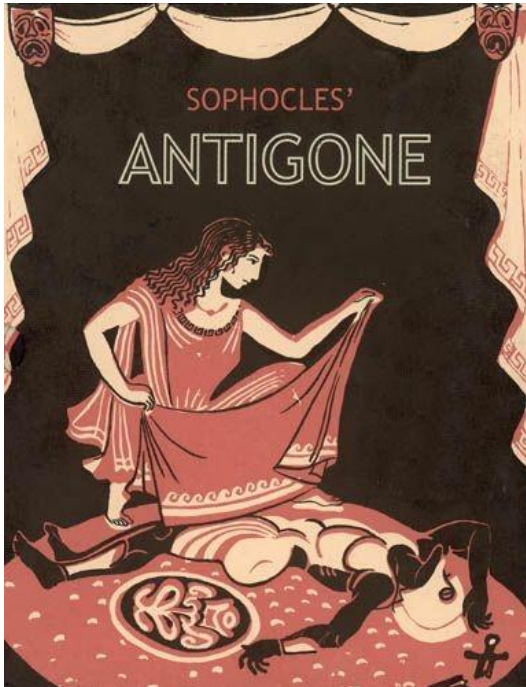


The theater of Dionysus, Athens (Saskia, Ltd.)

# FAMILY TREE



# WHAT DO SCENE 4, ODE 4, SCENE 5, PAEAN AND EXODOS OF ANTIGONE FOCUS ON?



- Family Conflict (internal and external)
- Death (tragedy)
- Poor judgment
- Feeling and thinking
- Fate
- Loyalty
- Love

GENRES &  
SUBGENRES

# TRAGEDY

- Not completely like modern tragedies (ex. sad & gloomy).
- Tragedies heavily used pathos (Greek for suffering).
- Used masks and other props.
- Were a form of worship to Dionysus.<sup>7</sup>



# TRAGIC HERO

- Antigone and Creon are both like tragic heroes.
- Each have their own hamartia which leads to their downfalls.<sup>8,9</sup>





# FAMILY CONFLICT & TRAGEDY IN ANTIGONE

- Antigone hangs herself
- Haimon stabs himself
- Eurydice curses Creon and blames him for everything
- Eurydice kills herself



DOMINANT THEMES

# FAMILY: THE STORY OF NIOBE

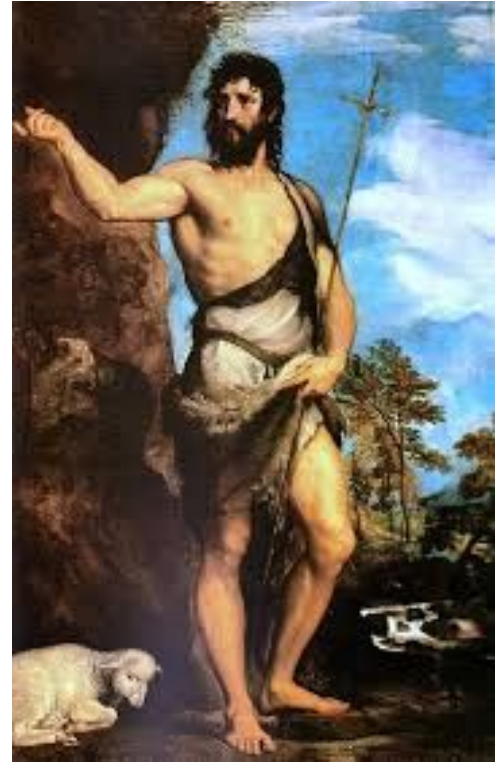
- Antigone relates her story to the story of Niobe.
- Antigone says “How often have I hear the story of Niobe, Tantalus’s wretched daughter...” (18)
- Chorus tells Antigone that Niobe “was born of heaven,” but Antigone is a woman.



# WOMANHOOD

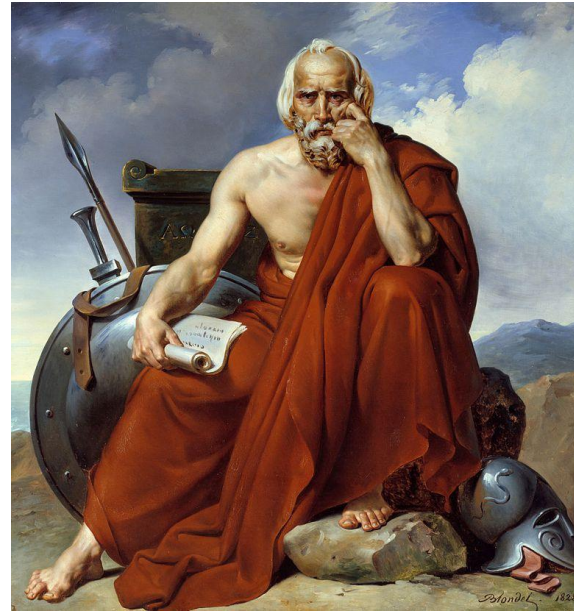
- Antigone defies the place a woman is supposed to have during this time period
- Antigone and Ismene contrast each other
- Creon is the prime example of the beliefs that males hold during this period

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# POWER AND CORRUPTION: DRYAS AND LYCURGUS

- A character the chorus compares to Antigone is Lycurgus.
- The chorus says “And Dryas’s son also, that furious king, before the god’s poisoning anger for his pride...” (21)
- Lycurgus is shut in prison cave.



# DETERMINATION: KING/QUEEN/SON'S EYES

- An old man tells a half-remembered tale of horror.
- He says “how a king’s new woman, sick with hatred for the queen he had imprisoned, ripped out his two sons’ eyes with her bloody hands.” (22)
- This is similar to Eurydice

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# THE DIVINE/SUPERNATURAL

- Theme of alluding to the divine or supernatural.
- The whole premise of a proper burial relates to the divine.
- There are references to multiple gods (Dionysus, Ares, Furies).



HISTORICAL AND  
MYTHOLOGICAL  
CONTEXT



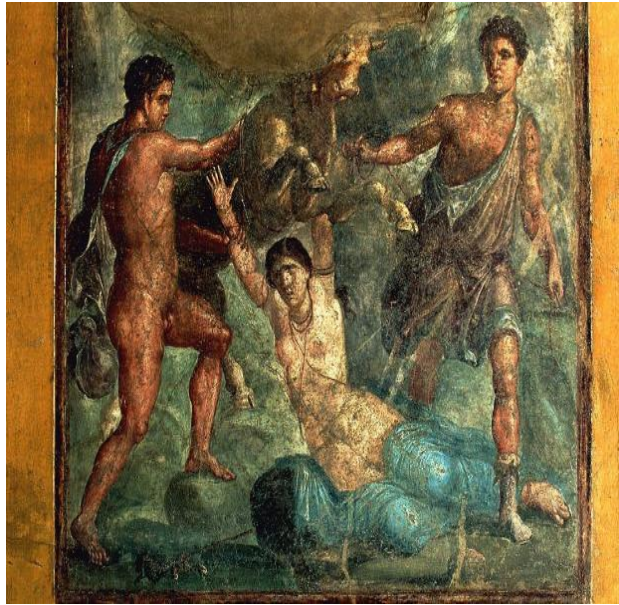
# RIVER OF ACHERON

*“Now sleepy Death  
Summons me down to Acheron, that cold shore:  
There is no bridesong there, nor any music.”*

- The underworld had different realms that included five rivers.
- River of Acheron is the barrier between the mortal world and the underworld.
- Proper burial was important in order for souls to cross to the underworld.



# TALE OF DIRCE



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*“O men many-charioted, in love with Fortune,  
Dear springs of Dirce, sacred Theban grove,  
Be witnesses for me, denied all pity,  
Unjustly judged!”*

- Antiope is given to Dirce by Lycus after being impregnated by Zeus.
- Antiope reunites with her children after escaping Dirce.
- Dirce killed by the children by being tied to the horns of a bull.
- Dirce is devoted to the god Dionysus.

# PERSEPHONE, QUEEN OF THE UNDERWORLD

- Abducted by Hades
- Zeus aware of Persephone's disappearance but wanted to prevent a fight with his brother.
- Her mother, Demeter, was furious and decided to take a leave of absence from her duties as goddess of harvest and fertility.
- To please either of the two Persephone's had to choose between her husband or her home.

*"To my own people, whose great number— So many destroyed—Persephone has Received among the dead.*



# THE NINE IMPLACABLE SISTERS

- Commonly referred to as the Nine Muses
- Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomeni, Terpsichore, Erato, Polymnia, Ourania, Calliope
- Zeus bewildered Mnemosyne and slept with her for nine consecutive nights
- The muses are inventors



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# LOVE: DANAË'S BEAUTY

- The chorus says “All Danaë’s beauty was locked away in a brazen cell where the sunlight could not come...” (21)
- The chorus compares Antigone’s situation with other mythical figures.
- One of the figures is Danaë.



# LOVE FOR SIBLINGS, ROMANTIC INTERESTS, AND OFFSPRING

- Sophocles uses direct characterization to show Antigone's intentions.
- Antigone uses logic to show that she will never be able to get another brother.



# ZEUS AND HIS LOVES

- Danae: princess of Argos who was Imprisoned by her father
- Antiope: lady of Thebes who was seduced by Zeus
- Leda: queen of Lakedaimonia was seduced by Zeus in the form of a swan
- Semele: princess of Thebes



# GOD OF THE NORTH WIND

- Aeolus and his children and control the winds
- Boreas and his capabilities were destructive
- Boreas and his wife caused destruction in the city of Athens





# "THE FURIES AND THE DARK GODS OF HELL ARE SWIFT WITH TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT"

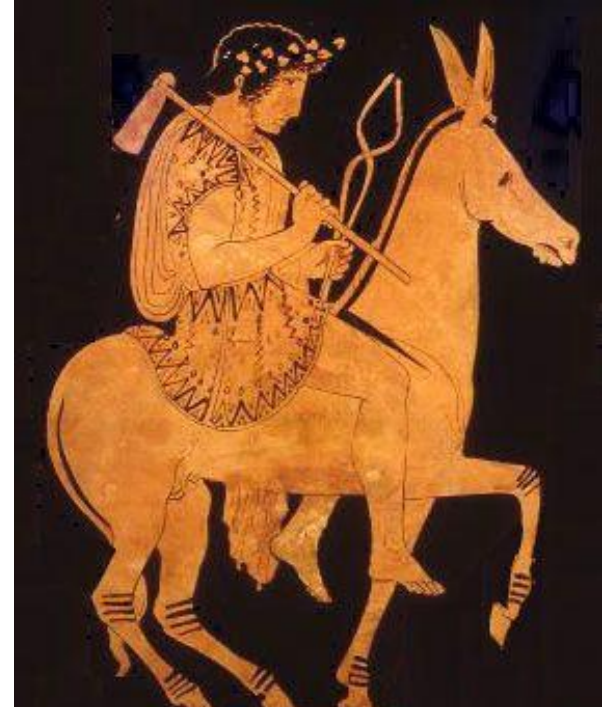
- Sophocles again follows in the theme of alluding to the divine.
- The furies punish disrespectful actions towards family.
- Teiresias warns Creon of their wrath.



# CORRUPTION: HEPHAISTOS

- The blind prophet tells Creon: “I began the rites of burnt-offering at the altar but Hephaistos failed me...” (23)
- He tells Creon that Creon brought this “calamity” upon his people.
- Wrong & Evil could be repaired without pride.

YS



# LOSS OF HOPE: PALLAS (ATHENA)

- When the messenger and the priest are talking about how Haimon is dead, Eurydice enters.
- Eurydice says “As I was unlocking the gate of Pallas’s shrine, for I needed her help today, I heard a voice telling of some new sorrow.” (26)

YS



# LITERARY TECHNIQUES

# IRONY

- Creon's need to be king is what causes his eternal loneliness
- The curse of both Oedipus and Creon
  - “ Megareus dead, and for Haimon dead, her sons, and her last breath was a curse for their father, the murderer of her sons”

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# FORESHADOWING

- The Chorus sings about women who have similar fates to Antigone.
- They end by saying “But in her marriage deathless Fate found means to build a tomb like yours for all her joy” (22)
- Oedipus’ actions of killing his father and marrying his mother foreshadow Antigone’s tragic end.



# TANTALUS AND HIS CONNECTION TO ORESTES (18) (ALLUSION)

- Tried to feed his son to the gods.
- Punished in Hades by being constantly hungry with food and water near him which he cannot get.
- He is a part of Orestes's family tree.<sup>11</sup>



# INCEST IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY (19) (ALLUSION)

- “My ill-fated mother’s / Self-creating intercourse with my father!”
- Oedipus’s incest was unintentional.
- Orestes family tree had multiple instances of incest.
- All of the occurrences have not resulted well.





# "SEALED UP BY DIONYSUS IN DEAF STONE" (21) (ALLUSION)

- The king Lycurgus disrespected the god Dionysus.
- Dionysus drives Lycurgus to insanity who then gets closed into a cave.
- He is locked away like Antigone into a vault.<sup>10</sup>



# "WHILE GRINNING ARES WATCHED THE SHUTTLE PLUNGE"

## (22) (ALLUSION)

- Ares is the god of war.
- Ares is grinning at the violence that the Queen Idaia is causing by blinding her sons.
- This follows in the theme of constantly alluding to the divine.<sup>10</sup>



AS

KEY WORDS, TERMS,  
OR HISTORICAL  
PHENOMENA

# KEY WORDS

## Calamity

“Creon, you yourself have brought this new calamity upon us” says Teiresias (23).

- This explains the tragedy and disaster.

## Paeon

- Means a happy or positive verse.
- Praise the gods and the divine.<sup>12</sup>

## Exodos

- Means the last scene.
- Indicates the last events before the curtain call.<sup>13</sup>

PARALLEL TEXTS

# SIMILAR/RELATABLE TEXTS TO ANTIGONE

- Oedipus Rex by Sophocles (similar tragedy)
- The Odyssey by Homer (heroic characteristics)
- Arcadia by Tom Stoppard (similar themes)
- Shakespeare also wrote tragedies with tragic heroes (*Macbeth*)
- The idea of locking someone away is also prevalent in *A Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allan Poe.
- Like Greek tragedies, *The Aleph* by Jorge Borges also is filled with irony.



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# QUESTIONS

1. Who do you think is the tragic hero in this play: Creon or Antigone?
2. What was his or her hamartia or tragic flaw?
3. Based on Oedipus's scenario, do you think it is better to be ignorant to the truth or know it no matter how bad it is?
4. What do you think the priest means at the end when he says "there is no happiness without wisdom?"
5. Although none of the gods appear in this play like in *Libation Bearers*. Do you think the furies would have went after Antigone?



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