THE CHILDREN OF OEDIPUS

by

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Abstract: The Children of Oedipus

In Chapter 1, references to the Oedipus-myth prior to its treatment by the tragedians are examined. Part I (Chapters 2 - 4) deals with the portrayal of Polyneices and Eteocles in Aeschylus's Septem, Euripides' Phoenissae and Sophocles' Oedipus Coloneus. In Part II (Chapters 5 - 6), the treatment of Antigone and Ismene in the above plays is discussed. The thesis examines the presentation by each dramatist of the children of Oedipus, and attempts to account for it in terms of the tragedian's dramatic purpose.

In the Septem, Aeschylus deals with man's relationship to Fate rather than man's relationship to man; hence Polyneices does not appear. Eteocles is presented as a good general, whose concern for the defence of the city and reluctance to appear weak lead him to fight Polyneices, thereby co-operating with the Erinys. The curse ends with the deaths of the brothers; there is no reference to the campaign of the Epigoni. Lines 861-74 and line 1005 to the end of the play are probably spurious, and lines 961-1004 should be given to the divided Chorus, with the result that the sisters are removed from the play

The Phoenissae is episodic in structure, with the conflict of Eteocles and Polyneices forming the central episode. Polyneices is portrayed sympathetically and Eteocles very unfavourably, but both brothers are guilty - Eteocles for usurping power and Polyneices for attacking his fatherland. The question of δίκη is prominent on the human level. The divine dimension is not emphasised, as Euripides interprets the curse psychologically rather than as an objective force. The authenticity of the scenes in which Antigone appears has been suspected, but it can be defended with the exception of individual lines and the section from line 1737 to the end of the play.

In the Oedipus Coloneus, Polyneices' function is to provoke Oedipus' curse. He is presented sympathetically, because Sophocles wishes to highlight the merciless anger of Oedipus. The rôle of the sisters is that of devoted daughters in contrast to the neglectful sons. They are not highly individualized.

In the Antigone, Ismene is more than a foil for Antigone - through her, Sophocles questions the virtue of σωφροσύνη. In the conflict between Creon and Antigone, the latter is clearly in the right. Creon represents a human law and Antigone adheres to a divine one. Antigone's devotion to Polyneices is absolute; there is no suggestion that she loves Haemon.

T O M Y M O T H E R

DECLARATION

I, Marica Catacousinos, hereby certify that this dissertation has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

1 May 1982

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

I was admitted as a candidate for the degree of M. Litt. in October 1980 under Resolution 1967 No. 9; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between October 1981 and May 1982.

1 May 1982

CERTIFICATE

I hereby declare that the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations for the degree of Master of Letters (M. Litt.) at the University of St. Andrews have been fulfilled by the candidate, Marica Catacousinos.

signature of Supervisor

1 May 1982

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I should like to thank my Supervisor, Mrs. Elizabeth Craik, for her encouragement, criticism, unfailing patience and constant availability during this past year. Thanks are due also to the staff of the University Library for facing my barrage of requests and queries with equanimity and helpfulness, and to my fiancé, Mr. Gary Frank, for typing this manuscript.

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p. 12: Read "Laodamas" for "Laedamas" (line 9).

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PREFACE

References to, and quotations from, Aeschylus' Septem are from the Oxford Classical Text (ed. Page). In the case of Sophocles Antigone and Oedipus Coloneus, references are to the respective editions of Jebb. For references to Euripides' Phoenissae, the Oxford Classical Text (ed. Murray) has been used.

Abbreviations of the names and works of ancient authors are those of Liddell and Scott. The titles of modern journals are abbreviated according to the forms set out in L'Annee Philologique.

I. ANTECEDENTS OF THE MYTH IN TRAGEDY

Originality of subject is not a characteristic of Greek tragedy; of all the extant works of the tragic playwrights, only one- the Persae of Aeschylus- is not based on a theme taken from mythology. The tragedian, however, had a fairly free hand in his use of the mythological material: as long as he preserved the main outlines of the story, he could make of the detail what he liked. Thus, when Aeschylus wrote his Theban trilogy (see p. 17), he was able to select from, add to, and mould into the form he desired, whatever material was available to him. And Sophocles and Euripides could build on or adapt what he had created. So myth grows.

(1) Sources

Myth, the raw material of the dramatists, had already been manipulated by epic and lyric poets.[1]

To begin with, there are three passages of Homer: Iliad 23. 678-80, Iliad 4. 376-99, Odyssey 11. 271-80. To these may be added a brief passage of Hesiod: Works and Days 161-65. We now come to what is virtually a great void- the poems of the Epic Cycle, which have survived, at best, only in fragments. This is unfortunate, since we are told that Sophocles' favourite source of raw material for his plays was these poems,[2] and we know that, among them, at least two must have assigned a prominent role to Oedipus. These two poems are the Thebaid and the Oedipodia.

The Thebaid was an epic which dealt with the war of the

Seven against Thebes. Pausanias praises it as the best epic poem apart from the Iliad and the Odyssey, and it was often ascribed to Homer in antiquity.[3] Two fragments of the Thebaid which relate to Oedipus and his family survive; these are preserved in Athenaeus 11. 465 e and the scholion on Oedipus Coloneus 1375.

The Oedipodia is traditionally ascribed to an otherwise unknown Lacedaemonian, Cinaethon, of the eigth century B.C.[4] There are only two fragments of the epic extant. The first of these is preserved in a scholion on Euripides' Phoenissae 1760, ascribed to a certain Peisander, who was probably a poet of Cameirus in Rhodes, of the seventh century B.C.[5] The dependence of Peisander on the Oedipodia is fairly generally accepted; the fact that the section of the Oedipodia referred to by Peisander agrees in content with the second surviving fragment of that epic, which is preserved in Pausanias,[6] suggests that the lost epic was the common source of both authors.[7]

Turning to our lyric sources, we find in Sallustius' hypothesis to Sophocles' Antigone that Mimnermus mentioned Ismene. We also find references to the Oedipus-myth in three poems of Pindar, all of which probably pre-date the Septem (produced in 467 B.C.): O. 2. 38-45; O. 6. 15-16; N. 9. 18-24.

One may add to these principal passages of epic and lyric source material the content of various scholia and fragments, the source of which is either unknown or which may not pre-date the first production of Aeschylus' Septem.

PART I: THE BROTHERS

CHAPTER II: ETEOCLES IN THE SEPTEM

CHAPTER III: POLYNEICES AND ETEOCLES IN THE PHOENISSAE

CHAPTER IV: POLYNEICES IN THE OEDIPUS COLONEUS

taken strictly in its usual meaning 'soon, quickly', since Jocasta's sons by Oedipus are mentioned by Homer. . . . : translate 'after that' as in Il. 11. 418."[10] It has been pointed out, however, that although Eteocles and Polyneices are mentioned by Homer in Iliad 4. 376 ff., it is nowhere indicated that they are the sons of Jocasta by Oedipus.[11] The dispute over the meaning of ἆφαρ has arisen because scholars have wished, unnecessarily, to reconcile the story of Oedipus as related in the Odyssey with the later version found in the works of the tragedians.[12]

In the account of the Peisander-scholion on Phoenissae 1760, we read: φασὶ δὲ ὅτι μετὰ τὸν θάνατον τῆς Ἰοκάστης καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ τύφλωσιν ἔγημεν Εὐρυγάνην παρθένον, ἐξ ἧς αὐτῷ γεγόνασιν οἱ τέσσαρες παῖδες. Pausanias, commenting on ἆφαρ in the passage of the Odyssey cited above, writes:

> πῶς οὖν ἐποίησαν ἀναπύσασθαι ἆφαρ, εἰ δὴ τέσσαρες ἐκ τῆς Ἐπικάστης ἐγένοντο παῖδες τῷ Οἰδίποδι; ἐξ Εὐρυγανείας δὲ τῆς Ὑπέρφαντος ἐγεγόνεσαν. δηλοῖ δὲ καὶ ὁ τὰ ἔπη ποιήσας ἃ Οἰδιπόδια ὀνομάζουσι· καὶ Ὀνασίας Πλαταιάσιν ἔγραψε κατηφῆ τὴν Εὐρυγάνειαν ἐπὶ τῇ μάχῃ τῶν παίδων. (Paus. 9. 5. 11)

Both Peisander and Pausanias (for whom the Oedipodia was probably a common source[13]) agree that the four children of Oedipus were the product, not of his union with Jocasta, but of a second marriage to a woman called Eurygane/Euryganeia (cf. Epicaste/Iocaste). The comment of the scholiast on Phoenissae 13 agrees with this version found in the Oedipodia.[14]

Pherecydes, a logographer of the fifth century B.C., is cited by the scholiast on Phoenissae 53, who writes:

> Οἰδίποδι ... Κρέων δίδωσι τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα Λαΐου, μητέρα δ' αὐτοῦ Ἰοκάστην, ἐξ ἧς γίνονται αὐτῷ Φράστωρ καὶ Λαόνυτος, οἳ θνήσκουσιν ὑπὸ Μινυῶν καὶ Ἐργίνου. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐνιαυτὸς παρῆλθε, γαμεῖ ὁ Οἰδίπους Εὐρυγάνειαν τὴν Περίφαντος, ἐξ ἧς γίνονται αὐτῷ Ἀντιγόνη καὶ Ἰσμήνη .... υἱοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ ἐξ αὐτῆς Ἐτεοκλῆς καὶ Πολυνείκης.

This seems to be an attempt on the part of Pherecydes to reach a compromise between the position found in the Odyssey and the version of the Oedipodia.[15]

In the version of Pherecydes, we find the introduction of a third wife; the scholiast writes:

> ἐπεὶ δὲ Εὐρυγάνεια ἐτελεύτησε, γαμεῖ ὁ Οἰδίπους Ἀστυμέδουσαν τὴν Σθενέλου.

The scholiast on Iliad 4. 376 likewise mentions Astymedusa, but according to him, she is the second wife of Oedipus, being the successor of Jocasta rather than of Euryganeia. The introduction of Astymedusa seems to be a late addition to the legend. She is probably to be identified with Euryganeia; the sense contained in the names (Euryganeia- "wide in honour", Astymedusa-"ruling the city") is not dissimilar. The scholiast appears to regard Polyneices and Eteocles as being the offspring of Jocasta rather than of Astymedusa.

There is no mention of either Epicaste or Euryganeia in our extant lyric sources. The position, thus, as far as we are able to make out from the scanty material which survives, seems to be that, according to the earliest versions of the

legend, Oedipus married Epicaste, but did not have children by her. After her death, however, he married Euryganeia, who bore him the four children: Antigone, Ismene, Polyneices and Eteocles. If Pherecydes wrote before 467 B.C. or used an earlier source for his account that Oedipus made a second marriage after the death of Jocasta but that the four children were Jocasta's, the tragedians may have used this source for their treatment of the subject, since Aeschylus[16] Sophocles and Euripides all take Jocasta to be the mother of Oedipus' children. This may, however, have been the innovation of Aeschylus.

(3) After the ἀναγνώρισις

Jocasta's death, after her discovery of the identity of her son/husband, is attested by all the extant sources which mention her, and from Odyssey 11. 277-79 we learn that she hanged herself.

But what of Oedipus? In Odyssey 11. 278-80, we read that, after Jocasta's death, Oedipus suffered many ἄλγεα through the Erinys of his mother. Nothing is said about the nature of these ἄλγεα , but scholars have variously conjectured (probably with over-precise attempts at exegesis) that they were the sufferings of a broken spirit or the troubles of war.[17]

In Iliad 23. 678-80 we find a mention of a certain Mecisteus, an Argive, ὅς ποτε θήβασδ' ἦλθε δεδουπότος Οἰδιπόδαο/ ἐς τάφον . The verb δεδουπότος implies that Oedipus had fallen in battle.[18] This report is supplemented by a Hesiodic fragment, which says that when Oedipus died at Thebes, Argeia,

the daughter of Adrastus, went to Thebes with other Argives for the funeral games and the burial.[19] Hesiod, Works and Days 161 ff., speaks of a battle fought μήλων ἕνεκ' Οἰδιπόδαο, which could be the battle implied by the passage in the Iliad, since it is known that cattle-raiding in heroic times could result in bloody wars.[20]

There is no reference to the blinding or self-blinding of Oedipus in Homer or Hesiod. As far as we can ascertain from the testimony of these sources, Oedipus did not suffer from a broken spirit after the discovery of his incestuous relationship with his mother- he took another wife, retained his throne, was killed in battle, and was well enough thought of among his people for funeral games to be held in his honour.

The Thebaid may have portrayed a blind Oedipus, but such a hypothesis rests on very tenuous evidence- the possible implication of two words: φράσθη in the Athenaeus fragment and ἐνόησε in the scholion on the Oedipus Coloneus.[21]

In the Peisander-scholion on Phoenissae 1760 we read that Oedipus remarried μετὰ . . . τὴν αὐτοῦ τύφλωσιν. Does this mean that in the Oedipodia Oedipus was blinded or that he blinded himself? For the question of Oedipus' second marriage we had the version of Pausanias to corroborate that of Peisander, but in this case Peisander stands alone. Again, our evidence is very slight and somewhat uncertain.

That there was a tradition that Oedipus was blinded by others (possibly servants of Laius) is indicated by the scholia

on Phoenissae 26 and 61, but the source of the scholia is not known; perhaps it was either the Thebaid or the Oedipodia. It is quite possible that the self-blinding of Oedipus was an innovation of Aeschylus (most probably in his Oedipus).[22]

In Odyssey 11. 271-80 it is clearly stated that after Jocasta's death, Oedipus continued to rule Thebes, and as much seems to be implied by Iliad 23. 678-80. A different account, however, is found in the scholion A on Iliad 4. 376:

> ἀγανακτήσας δὲ ἐκεῖνος ἐπηράσατο αὐτοῖς δι' αἵματος παραλαβεῖν τὴν χώραν, καὶ παρέδωκε τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῖς. Ἐτεοκλῆς δὲ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἐξέβαλε Πολυνείκην τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ὡς πρεσβύτερος.

This suggests that Oedipus abdicated in favour of his sons. There is, however, no mention of his leaving Thebes. His abdication may be implicit in the fragments of the Thebaid, since his sons and not Oedipus perform the sacrifice and he appears to be dependent on them (because of his blindness maybe, or perhaps he is imprisoned).

Possibly it was an accepted heroic custom for the father to abdicate in old age, but to continue to live in the royal palace after his son had ascended the throne; such an arrangement seems to have existed between Laertes and Odysseus in the Odyssey, Cadmus and Pentheus in Euripides' Bacchae, Pheres and Admetus in Euripides' Alcestis. This version of the myth seems to have been adopted by Euripides in the Phoenissae, in which Oedipus is alive in the palace at Thebes, though a captive and no longer ruling.

(4) The Children

Antigone and Ismene are not mentioned in any of the extant epic material. Late in the seventh century B.C., the elegiac poet Mimnermus related that Ismene was killed at Thebes by Tydeus.[23] This incident is also depicted on a sixth-century B.C. vase in the Louvre. The scholiast on Phoenissae 53 mentions Ismene, ἣν ἀναιρεῖ Τυδεὺς ἐπὶ κρήνης, καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἡ κρήνη Ἰσμήνη καλεῖται, in a comment which may be based on Mimnermus.

We do not know why, or under what circumstances Tydeus killed Ismene. Since we know the tradition that Tydeus was one of the warriors who fought with Polyneices against Thebes,[24] it is tempting to imagine that he killed Ismene during the siege of the Seven. It has been pointed out, however, that there is no indication that the incident related by Mimnermus occurred in the context of the expedition of the Seven; it cannot even be maintained with certainty that the Ismene referred to is the daughter of Oedipus.[25] One of the two main rivers in Thebes was called the Ismenus, and possibly the feminine form, Ismene, may signify no more than that the victim of Tydeus was a Theban girl. Perhaps also there may be a connection between the river and the κρήνη mentioned by the scholiast on the Phoenissae.

There is a further reference to the sisters ascribed to Ion of Chios[26] of the mid-fifth century B.C., who says that both sisters were burnt by Eteocles' son, Laodamas. It would seem that this fate was inflicted upon them as a punishment, but

for what reason is not known.[27] It is noteworthy, however, that Ismene and Antigone received the same treatment. There is, thus, no extant evidence of Antigone's prominence in the legend prior to the production of Sophocles' Antigone (the passages in which the sisters appear in Aeschylus' Septem being either spurious or wrongly ascribed to them; see pp. 68-71).

The strife between Polyneices and Eteocles is mentioned in Iliad 4. 376 ff. and in the two surviving fragments of the Thebaid. If Hesiod, Works and Days 161 ff., does not refer to the battle against cattle-raiders in which Oedipus met his end, it may refer to the war of the Seven against Thebes.[28] Pindar, writing a few years before the Septem of Aeschylus was produced, says that Polyneices and Eteocles died by each other's hand.[29] It would seem that Eteocles and Polyneices and the fighting between them were part of the earliest form of the myth, and the sense conveyed by the names of the brothers- Eteocles, "man of noble deeds" and Polyneices, "man of much strife"- suggests that in the original version Eteocles had right on his side.

The theme of refusal of burial to Polyneices is not mentioned in our surviving epic or lyric sources. Pausanias records a Theban legend to the effect that the bodies of Eteocles and Polyneices were burned on the same pyre and that the very flames refused to mingle.[30] Pindar mentions that there were seven funeral pyres for the seven divisions of the Argive army;[31] since he says nothing to the contrary, it must be assumed that Polyneices' body was burnt with those of the men in his corps. It appears, thus, that the theme of the

burial of Polyneices was another innovation of Sophocles in his Antigone.

Did Eteocles and Polyneices have children? No explicit mention is made in the surviving epic material of the brothers' having offspring, but as much is implied (at least for Polyneices) in the theme of the Epigoni, the lost epic poem which dealt with the destruction of Thebes by the sons of the Seven. Pindar, Herodotus and Pausanias all mention Thersander, the son of Polyneices.[32] Eteocles' son, Laedamas, is referred to by Ion of Chios, Herodotus and Pausanias.[33] None of the plays studied, moreover, is concerned with the offspring of the brothers; the Septem specifically says that they die ἄτεκνοι (828; see pp. 33-34). The probable reason for this is that references to the offspring of Polyneices and Eteocles would be redundant if not distracting, unless a tragedian wished to take the legend further than the third generation, as did Euripides in the Supplices.

(5) The Curse

The possible origins, the history and the nature of the curse on the House of Labdacus is far too complex a subject to be examined here in detail.

In brief, then, the crime of Laius seems to have been the abduction of Chrysippus, which evoked the curse of Chrysippus' father, Pelops (see p. 17). A version of the story exists in the Peisander-scholion on Phoenissae 1760, which implies- if one accepts the dependence of Peisander on the Oedipodia- that some crime on the part of Laius was known in epic.

In the Thebaid, Oedipus curses his sons twice. The first curse occurs because Polyneices places before him a silver table and a golden cup which had belonged to Laius; this distresses Oedipus, who prays:

ὡς οὔ οἱ πατρώϊ' ἐν ἠθείῃ φιλότητι
δάσσασθ', ἀμφοτέροισι δ' ἀεὶ πόλεμοί τε μάχαι τε....
(Ath. 11 465

Nothing is said of fratricide. In the second instance, Eteocles and Polyneices send their father the thigh from a sacrifice, which he regards as a slight. This time Oedipus reacts more violently:

εὔκτο Διὶ βασιλῆι καὶ ἄλλοις ἀθανάτοισι,
χερσὶν ὑπ' ἀλλήλων καταβήμεναι Ἄϊδος εἴσω.
(schol. on OC 1375)

It is strikingly obvious that the severity of the curses of Oedipus are out of all proportion to the nature of the offences, but with so little of the epic extant it is futile to speculate on the possible explanations for Oedipus' behaviour.

In Pindar's second Olympian Ode, we read:

ἐξ οὗπερ ἔκτεινε λᾶον μόριμος υἱὸς
σὺν αὐτόμενος, ἐν δὲ Πυθῶνι χρησθὲν
παλαίφατον τέλεσσεν.
ἰδοῖσα δ' ὀξεῖ' Ἐρινὺς
ἔπεφνέ οἱ σὺν ἀλλαλοφονίᾳ γένος ἀρήιον· (38-42).

Here, for the first time, we find some sort of continuity of guilt and punishment: Oedipus is for some reason doomed (because of the unexpiated crime of Laius, perhaps); he kills his father, and in direct response to the murder of Laius (not to a curse of Oedipus, as in the Thebaid and the Septem), the Erinys causes Eteocles and Polyneices to kill each other.

This idea of a curse lasting through three generations

was probably developed for the first time by Aeschylus in his Theban trilogy (see pp. 17-19).[34] Aeschylus may have been inspired by the increasing influence of the Delphic oracle, which emphasised the need for purification from, and atonement for, crime, with the possibility of a chain of sin and unexpiated guilt persisting from generation to generation.[35]

FOOTNOTES

[1]Passages which relate to the overpowering or outwitting of the Sphinx by Oedipus will be omitted, as they have no direct relevance to the subject of this dissertation.

[2]Ath. 7. 277 e: "Εχαιρε δ' ὁ Σοφοκλῆς τῷ ἐπικῷ κύκλῳ, ὡς καὶ ὅλα δράματα ποιῆσαι κατακολουθῶν τῇ ἐν τούτῳ μυθοποιίᾳ.

[3]Paus. 9. 9. 5.

[4]Kinkel (1877) p. 4; on date of Cinaethon see de Kock (AC 1961) p. 15, note 43.

[5]On Peisander, see Huxley (1969) pp. 100-105.

[6]See Paus. 9. 5. 10-11.

[7]Robert (1915) pp. 110-11 argues against the dependence of the Peisander-scholion on the Oedipodia. He claims that if it were based on the Oedipodia, the lost epic would have had to cover at least a five year period, if it dealt with the death of Jocasta, the marriage of Oedipus with Euryganeia and the birth of four children. This, according to Robert, would mean that the Oedipodia was written in a unique epic style, as all epics were known to cover a short time-span, with day following day. The obvious exception to this "rule" of Robert's is Homer's Odyssey, which covers a time-span of ten years (although, admittedly by clever use of reminiscence in the first person alongside narrative in the third). Robert's second argument is that a second marriage, after Oedipus' incestuous relationship with his mother, would be unthinkable in a Greek epic. This sort of argumentum e silentio must be relegated to the realms of speculation.

[8]According to Liddell and Scott, the adverb ἆφαρ , found in Homer mostly at the beginning of a clause with δὲ following it, means "straightway, forthwith".

[9]Jebb (1887) p. xiii.

[10]Stanford (1961) p. 391.

[11]See Baldry (G & R 1956) p. 25.

[12]See de Kock (AC 1961) p. 12.

[13]But cf. Robert (1915) pp. 110-11 who argues, not very convincingly, that the version of Pausanias does not agree with that of Peisander.

[14]Schol. ad E. Ph. 13: γαμεῖ δὲ Λάϊος: Ἐπιμενίδες Εὐρύκλειαν τὴν Ἐκφαντός φησιν αὐτὸν γεγαμηκέναι, ἐξ ἧς εἶναι τὸν Οἰδίποδα. οἱ δὲ δύο τὸν Λάϊόν φασι γῆμαι γυναῖκας, Εὐρύκλειαν καὶ Ἐριϰάστην. καὶ τὸν Οἰδίποδα δέ φασιν Ἐπικάστην τὴν μητέρα γεγαμηκέναι, καὶ Εὐρυγάνην.

[15]See Huxley (1969) p. 40; Kamerbeek (1967) p. 2 and note 1.

[16]Although it is not stated explicitly, A. Th. 752-56 indicates that Aeschylus considers the children to have been born of Jocasta, since Oedipus is said to have "sown his seed in the forbidden soil of his mother, where he was nurtured, and to have borne a bloody family."

[17]See de Kock (AC 1961) p. 12.

[18]cf. δούπησεν δὲ πεσών Il. 4. 504; 5. 42, 540, 617; 11. 449; δουπῆσαι 13. 426.

[19]Schol. ad Hom. Il. 23. 679.

[20]See de Kock (AC 1961) pp. 9-10.

[21]Ibid. p. 20.

[22]A. Th. 784 appears to refer to the self-blinding, but the line is corrupt.

[23]See Sallustius' hypothesis to S. Ant.

[24]See Hom. Il. 376 ff., A. Th. 377 ff., E. Ph. 119-21.

[25]See Robert (1915) pp. 125-26.

[26]See Sallustius' hypothesis to S. Ant.

[27]See Flint (1921) p. 63 for a discussion of the possible implications of the reference.

[28]So Kamerbeek (1967) p. 3.

[29]Pi. O. 2. 42.

[30]Paus. 9. 18. 3.

[31]Pi. N. 9. 24; O. 6. 15.

[32]Pi. O. 2. 43; Hdt. 4. 147; Paus. 9. 5. 14.

[33]See Sallustius' hypothesis to S. Ant., Hdt. 5. 61, Paus. 9. 5. 13.

[34]cf. the Oresteia, in which Aeschylus again traces the action of an inherited curse, this time in the House of Pelops.

[35]See de Kock (AC 1961) pp. 22-25 on the possible influence of Delphi in this respect.

PART I: THE BROTHERS

CHAPTER II: ETEOCLES IN THE SEPTEM

CHAPTER III: POLYNEICES AND ETEOCLES IN THE PHOENISSAE

CHAPTER IV: POLYNEICES IN THE OEDIPUS COLONEUS

II. ETEOCLES IN THE SEPTEM

The Septem,[1] produced in 467 B.C., was the last play in a trilogy, being preceded by the Laius and the Oedipus (and followed by the satyr play, the Sphinx), neither of which has survived except for a few fragments.

The content of the lost plays is broadly outlined in the second stasimon of the Septem (720-91), in which the history of misfortune of the House of Laius is reviewed.[2] We learn that Laius was told three times by Apollo in his Pythian shrine: θνάισκοντα γένναs ἄτερ σώζειν πόλιν (748-49). The harshness of Apollo's oracle suggests that Laius was perhaps being punished for some misdeed. From sources other than Aeschylus, we know the story that Laius, attracted by Chrysippus, son of Pelops, abducted him and carried him off to Thebes. Chrysippus committed suicide and Pelops cursed Laius.[3] It seems probable that Aeschylus used this story to account for the ἀρχὴ κακῶν of the House of Labdacus.[4]

Aeschylus does not say why Laius consulted the oracle; perhaps it was, as in Sophocles and Euripides,[5] because of his childlessness and his desire for offspring, or perhaps it was because the safety of the city was in some way being endangered. In support of the latter suggestion may be cited the story that the Sphinx was sent against Thebes by Hera, goddess of marriage, possibly because the city had not punished Laius for the rape of Chrysippus.[6] In the Septem, as in Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus, we hear of the presence of the Sphinx only in connection with Oedipus, but it is possible that Thebes had been terrorised by the monster even in the time of Laius.

Interestingly, Aeschylus does not give in the Septem the more usual version of the oracle- that if Laius begot a son, that son would kill him[7] (although this could be implied in the brief account found in 750-56). The emphasis, rather, is on the connection between the House of Laius and the city, which was thus in jeopardy even in the time of Laius.

Laius disobeyed the oracle and fathered Oedipus. Oedipus killed his father and married his mother (750-57), presumably after he had overcome the threat to the city in the form of the Sphinx (772-77). Oedipus eventually discovered who he was and what he had done;he blinded himself (778-84) and cursed his sons because of something to do with his τροφή , his food or maintenance (785-86)- the text is not clear here.[8] The gist of the curse, according to the Chorus of the Septem was:

καί σφε σιδαρονόμῳ
διὰ χερί ποτε λαχεῖν
κτήματα . (788-90) [9]

We do not know how far the Oedipus took the story, but it must have included the curse, as there are only glancing and cryptic references to its content in the Septem (727 ff., 941 ff.). It would probably also have said something about the quarrel between Eteocles and Polyneices and about Polyneices' subsequent actions, concerning which we are not informed in the Septem.[10] Our knowledge of the lost plays being so scanty, there are serious obstacles to our understanding of the final play in the trilogy. Our difficulties are compounded by the ending of the play, which, with its introduction of the new theme of Polyneices' burial by Antigone, is so suspect (although it cannot conclusively be proven to be spurious) that at least line 1005 to the end may fairly safely be expunged (see pp. 69-70).

In the Septem, Aeschylus deals with the same aspect of the myth as does Euripides in his Phoenissae- the attack on Thebes by the Argive troops[11] and the conflict between the brothers, Polyneices, the enemy of Thebes, and Eteocles, defender of the city- but the treatment of the mythical material by the two tragedians is very different. In Euripides' drama, the central episode is the ἀγών of the brothers (with Jocasta as mediator), which culminates in their mutual slaughter. The curse of Oedipus is mentioned, but it is not prominent, and it is the interaction of the brothers and the way in which the character of each shapes his fate that is the main concern of the play. In the Aeschylean version, Polyneices does not appear, the quarrel between the brothers is not dwelt upon (it is, in fact, not even mentioned until 577 ff.), and the dramatic interest of the play does not depend at all upon the interrelation of the characters of Eteocles and Polyneices, but only on the interrelation of situation. What Aeschylus is concerned with in the Septem, is the relationship of Eteocles, not with his brother, but with fate, the gods and the city.[12]

The play opens with Eteocles addressing the Κάδμου πολῖται (probably silent extras)[13] in a general's pre-battle speech, urging his people to face the enemy with eager courage. He appears responsible, capable and in control of the situation; he is the helmsman of the ship of state (2-3). There is perhaps a hint of cynicism in his attitude towards man's view of the gods:

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ εὖ πράξομεν, αἰτία θεοῦ·
> εἰ δ' ὤιθ', ὃ μὴ γένοιτο, συμφορὰ τύχοι,
> Ἐτεοκλέης ἂν εἷς πολὺς κατὰ πτόλιν
> ὑμνοῖθ' ὑπ' ἀστῶν φρομίοις πολυρρόθοις
> οἰμώγμασιν . . . . (4-8)

This mistrust is hardly surprising if one remembers that Eteocles has been cursed by his father and that the curse may well have occurred shortly before, in the last section of the Oedipus.[14]

When Eteocles refers to, or calls upon, the gods in connection with the protection of the city, there is nothing but conventional piety in his words (8-9, 14-15, 21-23, 35, 69-70), although it seems to be action and not prayer which appeals to him; he shows far more interest in military matters than in religious observances.[15] The first scene closes with a "frank appeal to self-interest",[16] when Eteocles, praying to Zeus and Earth to protect Thebes, says:

γένεσθε δ' ἀλκή· ξυνὰ δ' ἐλπίζω λέγειν,
πόλις γὰρ εὖ πράσσουσα δαίμονας τίει. (76-77)

These lines suggest a somewhat "commercial" and pragmatic view of the working of the gods on the part of the young king.

The Chorus of women enters with the line: θρεῦμαι φοβερὰ μεγάλ' ἄχη (78). They are in a state of uncontrollable fear and panic because of the threatening proximity of the enemy troops to the walls of Thebes. They cling to the images of the gods, praying frantically to each deity in turn to protect Thebes. The tone of the ode as a whole is one of near-hysterical terror. Into this scene of feminine frenzy, Eteocles enters in masculine wrath, addressing the women as θρέμματ' οὐκ ἀναστατά (181), and objecting strongly to their behaviour, which he claims is detrimental to the morale of the army (182-86) and therefore a help to the enemy outside the walls (191-94). He declares that anyone who does not obey him will be stoned to death (196-99).

An epirrhematic exchange, followed by stichomythia, ensues between king and Chorus (203 ff.), the women giving voice to their fear and helpless dependence on the gods, and Eteocles trying to silence them and to persuade them to pray to the gods in a more positive way. They are not easily quietened and, at one point, in angry frustration, Eteocles cries: ὦ Ζεῦ, γυναικῶν οἷον ὤπασας γένος (256). He is aware of the importance of using propitious words when praying to the gods and he reproves the Chorus for not doing so (258). He exhorts them: εὔχου τὰ κρείσσω, ξυμμάχους εἶναι θεούς (266), and utters a prayer for them to use as a model, a prayer promising rich honours to the gods if they bring victory to Thebes.

Many and varied views have been propounded by scholars concerning Eteocles' behaviour toward the women of the Chorus in the first epeisodion. One of the most sensible critics of the play has observed: "It seems to be a matter of temperament whether or not one finds an excess of violence in the abusive words with which Eteocles rebukes the frightened women."[17] This is probably true in general, but it may be pointed out that in the case of certain scholars, not temperament, but their interpretation of the play as a whole, necessitates that they take a particular stand with regard to this scene. The thesis of one critic, for example, is that after line 652, Eteocles' behaviour, owing to the intervention of the Erinys, becomes the opposite of what it was before;[18] he says that from line 653 onward Eteocles becomes reckless and frenzied.[19] Inevitably, therefore, he has to see Eteocles exhibiting the qualities of the ideal ruler before line 653. Another scholar takes the opposite attitude, claiming that the curse does not suddenly erupt after line 652, but that it is present throughout the play, only Eteocles does not understand it. His interpretation of

the play thus compels him to see the scene between Eteocles and the Chorus differently- as far as he is concerned, Eteocles' rough and peremptory handling of the women reveals him to be a far from ideal ruler.[20] The fact that scholars can interpret this Eteocles-Chorus scene in such sharply contrasting ways, suggests that there is indeed a danger of its being moulded to fit whatever view of the play a critic may adopt.

Taking the scene as it stands, without considering subsequent dramatic developments, certain features of the encounter between Eteocles and the Chorus stand out. Firstly, there is the real threat posed by the women to the safety of Thebes, a double threat in fact: by their weeping and wailing they are likely to demoralize the Theban warriors, and in their panic-stricken entreaties to the gods they may well utter an adverse omen. Secondly, the contrast between the fear of the women and the impatient toughness of Eteocles is very marked.[21] Thirdly, Eteocles' attitude toward the female sex in general is harsh (see 187-90, 195, 200-201, 256).

But is he acting as tyrannical despot and is that how we are meant to think of him,as in the Phoenissae? Surely not. He is a general in a military crisis, a situation in which the welfare of the whole city may be dependent upon the women's being silenced. It is his duty to Thebes as a whole to quieten the hysterical women by any means that are effective.

With regard to the young king's apparent dislike of women in general, various critics have pointed out that, after all, Eteocles is the son of an incestuous marriage and that some sexual confusion on his part may be forgiveable under the circumstances.[22] This seems

reasonable enough, and, as always, we have to bear in mind that we know virtually nothing about the two plays that preceded the Septem; something may have occurred in the Oedipus which would account for, and link up with, Eteocles' misogynistic attitude in the Septem. However, even leaving aside the possible influence of Eteocles' unnatural parentage, Eteocles' outbursts against women are not extraordinarily severe under the circumstances. He is keyed-up for the battle, busy with last-minute military arrangements, totally involved in the masculine activity of war, when the women threaten to ruin all his plans by their unrestrained lamentation. It is hardly surprising that Eteocles is angry, firstly with the women facing him, and then, by association, with the whole female sex, which, in his annoyance and frustration, he lumps together in a single troublesome group. The conflict between Eteocles and the women would undoubtedly have held far more significance for the Athenians of the fifth century B.C. than it does for us. The Persian Wars had ended only twelve years before the production of the Septem and men and women in the audience would probably have remembered the occurrence of similar scenes in their own lives.

Eteocles' attitude to the gods in this scene has caused scholars to label him as cynical, pragmatic, or insincere.[23] He does not rebuke the piety of the Chorus as such (236), but he maintains:

ἀνδρῶν τάδ' ἐστί, σφάγια καὶ χρηστήρια
θεοῖσιν ἕρδειν πολεμίων πεφωρένους,
σὸν δ' ἀῦ τὸ σιγᾶν καὶ μένειν εἴσω δόμων. (230-32)

And in 223, he says: μή μοι θεοὺς καλοῦσα βουλεύου κακῶς.
Clearly he believes that "god helps those who help themselves", in contrast with the members of the Chorus, who cast themselves helplessly

on the mercy of heaven. This belief of Eteocles in action is what Aeschylus is trying to convey; he is not implying that the Chorus are pious and Eteocles impious. Any touch of cynicism in Eteocles' view of the gods can be explained in terms of the curse (see pp. 19-20).

In the scene between Eteocles and the Chorus, Aeschylus is not presenting the ideal ruler- Eteocles is too excitable to be that- but he portrays a competent, energetic king, who is deeply concerned about the well-being of his city. Eteocles, in this scene, is not unlike Creon at the beginning of Sophocles' Antigone, but he is a far cry from Euripides' self-seeking, power-hungry and utterly unscrupulous creation.[24] It is significant that Eteocles is shown to be concerned and capable at the beginning of the Septem, for we shall see that, at least on the human level, it is these qualities that partly determine his doom.

At the end of his dialogue with the Chorus, Eteocles declares that he is going to post six men, with himself as the seventh, to face the enemy at the seven gates of Thebes (282-84), πρὶν ἀγγέλου σπερχνούς τε καὶ ταχυρρόθους / λόγους ἑκέσθαι καὶ φλέγειν χρείας ὕπο. (285-86) It has been asked by critics why Eteocles decides to take part in the battle himself, instead of directing operations from the sidelines, as Adrastus, on the Argive side, appears to do. One suggestion is that Eteocles did not originally intend to fight, but that he announces that he will go into battle in order to reassure his men, who have become disheartened as a result of the women's terror.[25] According to another critic, there is no reason given in the text for Eteocles' decision to fight and this is a weakness in Aeschylus' composition.[26] It has been put forward also that Eteocles leaves his post as the ship's helmsman in order to reassure the fearful women.[27]

But why should Eteocles' decision to fight be in any way surprising or need to be justified? There is no evidence in the text to suggest that he did not always intend to do so. Moreover, the play is not set in fifth-century Athens, but in an heroic past, and the great commanders of legend, like Achilles and Agamemnon, did fight with their men and led their armies into battle. True, Adrastus does not appear to plan on entering the battle (49-51), but then it is not really his battle. If Aeschylus is here following the usual version of the legend- and there is no reason to believe that he is not- Adrastus is merely furnishing troops for Polyneices, his son-in-law, to lead against Thebes.

However, the lines 282-86 of Eteocles are important for another reason. They raise the question: does Eteocles appoint the champions to defend the gates of Thebes when he leaves the stage at the end of the first epeisodion, with the result that the positions of the men (including his own) are already determined when the Scout arrives to tell Eteocles of the arrangement of the enemy chiefs? Or does Eteocles appoint each man to a gate only as the Scout announces each enemy leader? If Eteocles has made all the dispositions before the Scout's arrival, the sense of inevitability that grows during the Redepaare scene is increased and the working of the Erinys, the sense of predestination, is emphasised.[28] If, however, the dispositions are made in the Scout's presence, what is stressed is that the king decides his own fate and that this decision coincides with the will of the Erinys.[29]

The natural assumption is probably that Eteocles appoints his defenders when he says he is going to, and that he is doing this during the following choral ode. One would be encouraged in this

belief by the fact that Eteocles' parting words have indicated that he should make his arrangements as soon as possible (285-86).[30]

However,the words used by Eteocles when he justifies his position as his brother's opponent (672-75), suggest that as he appointed his champions, he was at pains to find the right man to face each enemy chief, but this could not have been the case if the position of each man had been determined before the Scout even appeared.[31]

The issue is further complicated by the curious mixture of tenses found in Eteocles' disposition of the Theban champions: in 408, Eteocles uses ἀντιτάξω , at 448 τέτακται , at 472-73 πέμποιμ' ἂν ἤδη and/or πέπεμπται , at 505 ἠρέθη , at 553 ἔστιν and at 621 ἀντιτάξομεν (Eteocles' words concerning himself are obviously in a different category). Thus, we find either three past tenses, two futures and one present, or two past tenses, three futures (the optative being virtually future) and one present, depending on how one takes line 472. At all events, there is a veritable confusion of tenses.

It has been suggested, in an attempt to account for this mixture of tenses, that Eteocles has made some of the dispositions before the arrival of the Scout, but not all of them.[32] This theory, while accounting for the problem of the tenses, is not otherwise very helpful, as it disposes of both the emphasis on inevitability and the stress on free will.[33] Moreover, the overall impression of the scene is one of symmetry: the Scout makes a speech seven time, Eteocles responds seven times, and after each pair of speeches (except the last), the Chorus sings briefly. Each time

the Scout announces the enemy challenger, he does so in similar terms, calling for the same response from Eteocles on each occasion. The symmetry and coherence of the scene militate against the idea that Eteocles is responding to some of the challenges with decisions taken in the past, to others with a direction for the future and to one with a command.

An ingenious answer to the question has been put forward: Aeschylus is being deliberately inconsistent and confusing in order to make the audience believe two contradictory things- that Eteocles' actions are utterly predestined, and that his free will leads him to make the decisions he does.[34] This is an attractive proposition- for an armchair critic. A member of an audience would probably hardly be aware of the question, as all his attention would be concentrated on the narrowing field of champions and the approaching moment of crisis for Eteocles. And no matter when Eteocles makes the dispositions of the champions, the result is the same- the brothers have to face each other.

In the Phoenissae, Eteocles, the older brother (E. Ph. 71-72), is clearly at fault for usurping absolute power and refusing to allow Polyneices to take his turn as king, when they had previously agreed to rule alternately, and in the scene of the ἀγών between the brothers (469 ff.) the situation is made quite plain. In Aeschylus' treatment of the conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices, the rights and wrongs of the brothers are not made clear to us, nor do we know which was the elder; again, we miss the help that the Oedipus might have given us. It would seem that Aeschylus may have portrayed the brothers as twins, but there is no firm evidence in the text to establish this conclusively.[35]

Polyneices' shield is emblazoned with the figure of Δίκη (646) and written on it are the words:

. . . κατάξω δ' ἄνδρα τόνδε, καὶ πόλιν
ἕξει πατρώαν δωμάτων τ' ἐπιστροφάς. (647-48)

Eteocles denies categorically that Polyneices has, or indeed has ever had, Δίκη on his side (662-71); he does not, however, back up his dismissal of Polyneices' claims with facts and reasons, nor does he produce evidence in support of his own case. His view of his brother cannot, of course, be regarded as an impartial one. There is not much help to be gleaned from the play either. Critics who see Polyneices as being in the wrong, may point to Amphiaraus' condemnation of him (580-86) and to the fact that the Chorus does not criticize Eteocles.[36] However, it has been observed that Amphiaraus does not rebuke Polyneices for his part in the quarrel of the brothers, but for going against his own city,[37] and that although the Chorus does not find fault with Eteocles, they do not say that he is in the right. The emphasis toward the end of the play (881 ff.) is on the shared fate of the brothers and on their mutual wrongdoing.[38] Undoubtedly, Polyneices is wrong to attack his fatherland (the diatribe of Amphiaraus against him points us quite clearly to that conclusion), and Eteocles is- as in the Phoenissae- in a strong moral position as the defender of Thebes,[39] but we do not know which of the brothers was responsible for the quarrel in the first place. In this play, at least, Aeschylus did not consider such details important. Certainly what is important in the Septem is that both brothers are under Oedipus' curse and both suffer equally.[40]

When Eteocles discovers that he is to meet Polyneices at the

seventh gate, he cries out:

ὦ θεομανές τε καὶ θεῶν μέγα στύγος,
ὦ πανδάκρυτον ἐμὸν Οἰδίπου γένος·
ἆρα πατρὸς δὴ νῦν ἀραὶ τελεσφόροι. (653-55)

In the first part of the play, Eteocles seems to think of the curse as a public thing, affecting him only insofar as he is part of the city (69-77); he even thinks it may turn out favourably for him and for Thebes (271-78). As far as he can see, the curse has brought about the war- for better or for worse for him and the city- and goes no further. At line 653, however, he realizes the full implication of his father's curse- that it is a personal threat of doom with no promise of good- and he recognizes the presence of the Erinys shaping his doom.

When Eteocles announces his intention of fighting Polyneices, the Chorus tries to dissuade him, pointing out the terrible pollution attendant upon a fratricide (681-82). They attempt to convince him that he can placate the μελάναιγις Ἐρινὺς by offerings to the gods (699-701) and that the mood of the δαίμων may yet change and become milder (705-708).

The tone of Eteocles' replies to the Chorus' entreaties is one of resignation to the inevitability of his doom (689-91; 719[41]). The question arises here of how the curse works; of whether, and how much, free will is allowed to Eteocles.[42] In the Phoenissae, Oedipus' curse is fulfilled as it is in the Septem (E.Ph. 624, 1425-26), but the Erinys does not appear as an external force of destruction; the doom of Eteocles is rooted in his tyrannical, avaricious, power-seeking (and Polyneices is not innocent either; see p. 49). In the Septem, however,

character does not play a major role in determining the fate of Eteocles- Aeschylus did not have the same interest as Sophocles and Euripides in individual personalities,[43] and we have seen that he makes nothing of the rights and wrongs of the quarrelling brothers. The curse, on the other hand, is almost tangible in its immediacy.

Eteocles in the Phoenissae is not aware (or does not say he is aware) that he is fulfilling his father's curse when he goes to meet Polyneices in their duel, but, in the Septem, as soon as Eteocles realizes that he is to face his brother at the seventh gate, he recognizes the working of the Erinys. And having recognized the Erinys, he co-operates with it. Does he have any choice? If he did not have, there would be no tragedy; we would be watching the wanton destruction by the gods of a mere puppet figure. What we find is Eteocles, in his hatred of Polyneices, merging his will with that of the Erinys; he acknowledges the irresistible power of the curse and voluntarily goes to meet his fate.[44] We saw him as a man of action in the first epeisodion and this characterization of him is borne out here. The Chorus, seeing that his rage will lead to his destruction, begs him:

μή, φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, Οἰδίπου τέκος, γένῃ
ὀργὴν ὁμοῖος τῷ κάκιστ' ἀῤῥωγένῳ· (677-78).

But Eteocles sees it as a threat to his honour if he should back down from the encounter (683-85). Thus Eteocles, because of his hatred of Polyneices and his desire to avoid shame, willingly follows where the Erinys leads.[45]

The curse is barely mentioned prior to line 653 ff.; there

is only one brief allusion to it when Eteocles prays:

ὦ Ζεῦ τε καὶ Γῆ καὶ πολισσοῦχοι θεοί,
Ἀρά τ' Ἐρινὺς πατρὸς ἡ μεγασθενής, (69-70).

The first half of the play is concerned with the defence of Thebes, but after line 652 the theme of the accursed son of Oedipus becomes prominent. The change of emphasis is underlined by the change in the mood of the Chorus[46]: at the beginning of the play, as we have seen, they flutter about in uncontrollable terror and Eteocles has to bring them to their senses; after Eteocles' recognition of the presence of the Erinys in the strife between him and Polyneices, it is the women of the Chorus who are sensible and Eteocles who is rash and emotional. The language used by scholars to describe the change in Eteocles tends to be somewhat exaggerated,[47] but that there is a change in the young king is undeniable- if there were not, if he were the same practical military man he is in the first part of the play, he would not co-operate with the Erinys and there would be no drama.

The apparent change of theme in the Septem has led scholars to question wherein the unity, if any, of the play lies, and how the Eteocles of the first part is connected, if at all, with the Eteocles of the second. One early explanation was supplied by Wilamowitz, who suggested that Aeschylus was combining two themes from different versions of the myth, in one of which the defence of Thebes featured prominently, while the other dealt principally with the curse. This theory is obviously unprovable, and it has not found favour among subsequent critics of the play. Then there is the suggestion that Aeschylus was not interested in the unity

of the play at all, but was concerned rather with the dramatic effect of the individual scenes. Another scholar sees no change in Eteocles, but regards him as any unselfish patriot all the way through the play. Yet another critic explains the sudden breaking-in of the Erinys (which effects a dramatic change in Eteocles) as a re-emergence of the major theme of the trilogy.[48]

It seems quite credible that the working of the curse on the House of Laius was the dominant motif in the trilogy[49] and the virtual absence of it in the first half of the Septem can, at least in part, be explained by the probable occurrence of the curse in the Oedipus, which would therefore be fresh in the minds of the audience. If this is the case, the problem of unity in the Septem is not so acute. However, without the evidence of the lost plays it is rash to speculate further. But even taking the Septem on its own, it seems that critics have tended to overstate the lack of unity of the play, when noting the change of emphasis in the second half. The play undoubtedly alters direction, but Eteocles remains the central character; Eteocles, ruler of Thebes, and Eteocles, the curse-ridden son of Oedipus, are inextricably linked. Eteocles is the king of Thebes precisely because he is the son of Oedipus and he is defending the city against enemy attack because of his father's curse.[50]

However, the question of the connection- if any exists- between the death of Eteocles and the city is a vexed one. The suggestion was put forward that, according to the oracle of Apollo, Thebes would survive only if the descendants of Laius were destroyed, and that Eteocles, recognizing this, sacrifices himself

to save the city and ends the family line.[51] It is now fairly generally recognized that this romantic Opfertod theory, finds no support in the text, no matter how much weight is put on the (possibly) limiting particle γε in line 71.[52]

We have noted that the city was in jeopardy in the reigns of both Laius and Oedipus (see p. 18) and it is threatened again in the third generation. Does the curse stop here for Thebes, or are we expected to see in the play references to the conquering of the city in the next generation by the Epigoni? Those who believe that the attack of the Epigoni, a regular feature of the myth, is implied in the Septem, base their case on the interpretation of three passages: 827-28, 840-44, 902-3.

In lines 827-28 we read that the sons of Oedipus were ἄτεκνοι. The natural meaning of this word is"childless", and scholars who find illusions to the Epigoni in the play, have had to explain it away,which they have not done with any degree of success.[53] In lines 840-44, the "pro-Epigoni" faction translate line 844 as "the oracles have not lost their force", which, in conjunction with line 843, suggests that there is still trouble ahead for Thebes. But although μέριμνα (843) can refer to future anxiety, it need not do so,[54] and if the future sense of μέριμνα is removed, line 844 translates naturally as "the oracles are not without force".[55] Lines 902-3 contain the words μένει / κτέανα τοῖς ἐπιγόνοις. There is, however, no reason not to understand ἐπιγόνοις as having the unspecific meaning "those coming after".[56]

Thus, the case for those who see a hint of the future destruction

of Thebes in the text rests on very flimsy evidence. On the other hand, the Septem contains strong indications that the family dies out when the brothers perish: Eteocles' words in lines 689-91, 702-4 seem to suggest the destruction of the whole family as the result of the duel between him and Polyneices; in line 720 the Chorus calls the Erinys ὠλεσ-ίοικον; in lines 877-78 it says that the enmity of the brothers has destroyed the House; in lines 742-45 we are told that the punishment resulting from Laius' wrongdoing is to last to the third generation. It is interesting that Antigone and, by implication, Ismene, seem to be disregarded when reference is made to the end of the House of Labdacus. Each sister would, of course, become part of her husband's family when she married and her offspring would not be viewed as direct descendants of Laius, but at the time of the play's action, Antigone and Ismene are as yet unmarried, yet the curse and its effects are not associated with them.

It seems likely, then, that Aeschylus, like Sophocles in the Antigone (S. Ant. 599-600), disregarded the incident of the Epigoni and intended us to see the troubles of the city as coming to an end with the death of the sons of Oedipus. Eteocles is a loyal general, dedicated to the protection of Thebes, and it is ironical that it is his carefully calculated arrangements for the defence of the city that, on one level, bring about his doom.[57] In the Septem there are Olympian deities and the Chthonic Erinys, and Eteocles prays to both to save the city (69-75). We see in the outcome of the play the two orders of divine power coming together- the city is saved by Zeus and the city-gods, but Eteocles is destroyed by the Erinys.[58] The city was threatened

by Laius' disobedience, but it was not destroyed; it was threatened by the Sphinx in the next generation, but Oedipus saved it. In the third generation it is threatened by the enemy Argives, but it stands firm (793-98), although the sons of Oedipus are punished.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The play is entitled οἱ Ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβας as early as Aristophanes (Ra. 1021, produced in 405 B.C.) and is so named in Ath. 22 a. This title is probably not that given by Aeschylus, however, as he avoids all mention of "Thebes" or "Thebans" in the play, preferring the ancient terms "Cadmea" and "Cadmeans". Tucker (1908) p. xxi comments: "This persistent avoidance of the contemporary name can scarcely be due to mere artistic cult of antiquarian accuracy." He suggests that the reason for Aeschylus' reluctance to use the name Thebes was political, as the Thebans had medized during the Persian Wars and had actually fought against the Athenians at the battle of Plataea in 479 B.C. They would thus not have been in good favour in Athens in 467 B.C. It is possible, even likely, that the play was called Eteocles, after the style of the Laius and the Oedipus.

In Ar. Ra. Euripides asks: καὶ τί σὺ δράσας οὕτως αὐτοὺς γενναίους ἐξεδίδαξας; Aeschylus replies: δρᾶμα ποιήσας Ἄρεως μεστόν and the drama was τοὺς ἑπτ' ἐπὶ Θήβας· ὃ θεασάμενος πᾶς ἄν τις ἀνὴρ ἠράσθη δάιος εἶναι . The play certainly has the potential, with its stress on matters military, to inspire Athenians to be δάιοι , but with its particular emphasis on the importance of careful defence- almost the whole first part of the play is devoted to this theme- it seems to have a more specific contemporary significance. In the Persian invasion of 480 B.C., the Athenians did not think themselves able to defend even the Acropolis, let alone the rest of the city, and abandoning Athens to the enemy, they took to the sea. And in 479 B.C. Mardonius completed the ruin of Athens. After Plataea (479 B.C.), Themistocles initiated the fortification of Athens, a policy that was continued by Cimon, who began his fortification of the Acropolis in 468 B.C. There seems to have been some reluctance on the part of the Athenians to bear the expenses of these fortifications, and it is possible that in the Septem, with its concentration on defence, Aeschylus is supporting Cimon's policy.

[2]Winnington-Ingram (YClS 1977) p. 5 remarks of this ode: "In its explicit reference to past generations it is unlike any other feature of the surviving play; and its purpose is, obviously, to place the immediate action in a long perspective, to pull the threads together in preparation for the final act, which closes not this play only, but the trilogy as a whole."

[3]See Ath. 602 f ; Schol. ad Phoen. 1760; Schol. ad Phoen. 60.

[4]See Lloyd-Jones (1971) pp. 120-21; Thalmann (1978) pp. 15-17.

[5]See the oracle given to Laius according to the ὑπόθεσις to S. OT and in E. Ph. 13-16.

[6]See Apollod. 3. 5. 8 and Schol. ad Phoen. 1760; see also the fragment of the Sphinx, preserved in Ar. Ra. 1287: Σφίγγα δυσαμερῶν πρύτανιν κύνα πέρπερε , and which the scholiast of the Codex Ravennas identifies as being ἐκ Σφιγγὸς Αἰσχύλου .

[7]See Ar. Ra. 1184-85; E. Ph. 17-20; S. OT 711-14.

[8]See Rose (1957) p. 228; Tucker (1908) p. 160.

[9]On the connection between the curse and the dream of Eteocles (710-11), see Burnett (GRBS 1973) p. 352 ff.

[10]See Winnington-Ingram (YClS 1977) p. 30.

[11]The reference to the Argive troops as ἑτεροφώνῳ στρατῷ (170) (cf. Tucker's ἑτερόφρονι) and to Thebes as a city Ἑλλάδος φθόγγον χέουσαν (72-73) has led critics to suggest that Aeschylus is thinking of the conflict of Athens with the Persians, since the actual difference in speech between the Thebans and the Argives would not have been great; see Sheppard (CQ 1913) p. 77; Rose (1957) p. 176; Solmsen (TAPhA 1937) p. 207-8. This would tie in with the stress on the insolent boasts of the Argive champions, for the Persians were regarded by the Greeks as being full of ὕβρις (the story of Xerxes' lashing of the Hellespont is used by Herodotus to illustrate this).

[12]See Kitto (1961) p. 47: "His [Aeschylus'] mind and dramatic imagination were absorbed in the questions of Man's relation to God, fate, the Universe, not in his relation to Man."

[13]See Taplin (1977) pp. 129-30.

[14]On these lines, see Winnington-Ingram (YClS 1977) p. 12, where he suggests that "the words express an attitude of mistrust, a sense of isolation, not only from other men but also from the gods, such as a man under a curse, the member of a doomed family, might feel." Tucker (1908) p. 9 comments: "No impiety is intended, but some sarcasem at the world."

[15]Gagarin (1976) p. 153 remarks: "The overall impression of Eteocles after the opening scene (1-77) is . . . of an effective military commander who is somewhat cynical about the ability of the gods to help the military cause but is willing to maintain a proper attitude of respect toward them."

[16]See Tucker (1908) p. 25.

[17]Winnington-Ingram (YClS 1977) pp. 13-14.

[18]See Solmsen (TAPhA 1937) p. 202.

[19]Ibid. p. 198.

[20]Patzer (HSPh 1958) p. 103; see also Dawe (PCPhS 1963) pp. 32-33.

[21]Gagarin (1976) pp. 124-25 sees this scene (and the play as a whole) as a male-female conflict.

[22]See Dawson (1970) p. 48; Podlecki (TAPhA 1964) p. 284 also refers in passing to Eteocles' unfortunate origins, when he comments on Eteocles' diatribe against women (187-90): ". . . his words are surprisingly bitter, even for a son of Jocasta." Caldwell (Arethusa 1973) pp. 197 ff., with what he calls "a psychoanalytic approach to the Septem", fastens on to the fact of Eteocles' unnatural parentage with excessive enthusiam, using it to explain not only Eteocles' attitude toward the women of the Chorus, but every aspect of his behaviour throughout the play.

[23]See Golden (CPh 1964) p. 83: ". . . his basic religious outlook is highly pragmatic and subordinated to his role as a soldier and ruler of Thebes." Podlecki (TAPhA 1964) pp. 288-89 comments on Eteocles' "insincerity". Dawson (1970) p. 5 mentions the "cynical tone" and the "sardonic irony" of certain references of Eteocles to

the gods; on p. 7 he says: ". . . Eteocles takes a very pragmatic view of the gods." But cf. Smyth (1924) p. 135.

[24]But cf. Golden (CPh 1964) p. 87, who sees in the Septem "a struggle for power and wealth in which no reference is made by the contestants to any other value than their own self-interest."

[25]See Verrall (1887) p. xiii: "The necessity of re-assuring by personal example his dispirited men. . . calls forth the declaration naturally enough. . . but it is a fatal step and fatally brought to pass."

[26]See Cameron (1971) p. 35.

[27]See Sheppard (CQ 1913) p. 73; Kitto (1961) p. 49; Rosenmeyer (Arion 1962) p. 60; Dawson (1970) p. 7.

[28]Otis (GRBS 1960) p. 159 and Burnett (GRBS 1973) p. 348 support this view.

[29]So, for example, Kirkwood (Phoenix 1969) p. 13: "It is essential . . . to a reasonable view of the play to see that Eteocles is choosing, of his own volition and in the light of the opposing champions, defenders for the city, not simply witnessing in helpless and unspoken amazement the divine machinations whereby his previously determined choices are by some daimonic manipulation perfectly matched."

[30]Dawe (PCPhS 1963) p. 34 comments: "He [Eteocles] has said that he will act before any hurried messages reach him. At vv. 369 ff. a messenger does arrive in a hurry, and by a happy coincidence, to which the chorus draws attention, so does Eteokles . . . . Since one part of our expectations has been fulfilled, namely the speedy arrival of a messenger, it is only natural to infer that the other part, the disposition of the champions, has also been expedited."

[31]Ibid. pp. 34-35.

[32]See, for example, Lesky (WS 1961) pp. 6-8.

[33]Dawe (PCPhS 1963) p. 35 adds: "It also leaves quite unexplained why Eteokles should come bounding onto the stage at v. 372 with his work only half done."

[34]See Lesky (WS 1961) p. 9.

[35]Dawson (1970) p. 14 points out that there is a "constant emphasis on duality and birth from the same womb". However, there is the same emphasis in the Phoenissae (E. Ph. 1263, 1288, 1354, 1369), where we are told that Polyneices is younger than Eteocles.

[36]So Cameron (1971) pp. 26-27.

[37]See Winnington-Ingram (YClS 1977) p. 20.

[38]See Thalmann (1978) p. 21.

[39]See Lloyd-Jones (CQ 1959) p. 85.

[40]Ibid.: "What is significant is not any individual guilt incurred by either, but the inherited guilt of both as members of the accursed race." Lloyd-Jones points out: "From the point of view of the city, Eteocles was a hero and Polyneices a traitor. From that of any other members of the royal house Polyneices might well seem the less guilty of the brothers. In the eyes of the Erinys,

both were equally accursed."

[41]Of these last words of Eteocles, Lesky (1978) p. 66 says: ". . . with them he rises to tragic grandeur, for he conquers the inevitable by identifying it with his own will."

[42]Thalmann (1978) relegates this question to a brief appendix (pp. 146-49) in his study of the Septem, claiming: ". . . even raising the question of free will in connection with a play of Aeschylus seems inappropriate" (p. 147). However, as Podlecki points out in his review of Thalmann's book (Phoenix 1981) p. 81: "Since the question of human freedom is at the heart of all great literature. . . the raising of it is not only appropriate but necessary . . . ."

[43]See Smyth (1924) p. 150; Easterling (G&R 1973) p. 4: ". . . it is the doing and suffering of the characters- the πρᾶξις - that interests Aeschylus, not the kind of personalities they are, and . . . the words they utter matter because they articulate the dramatic situation, rather than because they convey the characters' inner consciousness."

[44]See Lesky (1978) p. 65: "He knows this fate cannot be evaded, in fact- and here we recognize the Aeschylean notion of how the curse operates- he wilfully goes out to meet it and now desires the fratricidal combat. This dual motivation of the act, objectively by the curse, subjectively through personal desire, is typical of Aeschylus."

[45]Polyneices is "the man of much strife"- this is stressed several times in the play (577, 641, 658)- and Eteocles is "the man of glorious deeds"; who is concerned to avoid τὸ αἰσχρόν and to win εὔκλεια , but it is interesting that Eteocles feels he has to choose the way of "much strife" to become a "man of glorious deeds".

[46]See Solmsen (TAPhA 1937) pp. 200-201.

[47]See Sheppard (CQ 1913) p. 82: ". . . half mad and reasoning about honour with the perverted logic of madness, he rushes to his sin and death"; Solmsen (TAPhA 1937) p. 198: ". . . caution, prudence, self-control are cast to the winds. His mental equilibrium is completely upset; his whole being is in an uproar"; Murray (1940) p. 140: "In a flash Eteocles is changed. His coolness and self-control are gone"; Kitto (1961) p. 51: "We are given, in a sudden revelation, the other side of Eteocles, his hatred of his brother, his inability and his unwillingness to control his mad and fatalistic leap upon his doom "; Lloyd-Jones (CQ 1959) p. 86: "From this moment Eteocles' whole tone changes." But cf. Kirkwood (Phoenix 1969) pp. 14-15, who allows that Eteocles has an outburst of emotion at 653-55,but points out that he pulls himself together at 656-57.

[48]See Winnington-Ingram (YClS 1977) p. 8 for detailed references and comments.

[49]It is, as Kirkwood points out (Phoenix 1969) p. 11, like the theory of Wilamowitz, unprovable, but "it makes sense from what we know of the story. . . and accords well with the theological interests evinced in other plays of Aeschylus."

[50]See Kirkwood (Phoenix 1969) p. 22 in opposition to Solmsen (TAPhA 1937) p. 206: "The repeated linking of the two themes and the recurrence of the figure of Eteocles as the helmsman, even after the

theme of the Curse has assumed the dominant place in the play, invalidate the widely-accepted idea that the fate of Thebes is not affected by the action of Eteocles."

[51]See Robert (1915) pp. 264-65.

[52]See Cameron (1971) pp. 45-46; Podlecki (TAPhA 1964) pp. 296-97; Winnington-Ingram (YClS 1977) p. 13. But cf. Dawe (PCPhS 1963) pp. 37-42.

[53]See Kirkwood (Phoenix 1969) pp. 23-25.

[54]See A. Th. 849; also E. Hec. 897; Rh. 550.

[55]So Kirkwood (Phoenix 1969) p. 24.

[56]See Dawe (PCPhS 1963) p. 42, note 1; Thalmann (1978) p. 139 and note 6, p. 177.

[57]See Kirkwood (Phoenix 1969) p. 14.

[58]See Winnington-Ingram (YClS 1977) p. 45; Otis (GRBS 1960) p. 169. Solmsen (TAPhA 1937) p. 204 comments: ". . . in the Septem the Olympian gods in fact abandon Eteocles to the powers of the old religion, and Apollo, so far from opposing the Erinys, seems no less anxious than she to see Laios' whole family destroyed." He points out the difference in the Eumenides, where "Orestes, even though his innocence seems to be much more questionable than that of Eteocles, is effectively protected by Apollo and Athene against the Erinyes." Solmsen sees this as a development in Aeschylus' religious thinking, but cf. Lloyd-Jones (JHS 1956) pp. 64 ff., who denies that Aeschylus' theological views developed, or that they were as profound and sophisticated as is often claimed.

III. POLYNEICES AND ETEOCLES IN THE PHOENISSAE

The Phoenissae, like the Oedipus Coloneus, is episodic in structure, but unlike the Sophoclean play, it lacks a central figure to give it unity and meaning, as the character of Oedipus gives unity and meaning to the Coloneus.

This apparent lack of coherence has caused critics to debate what Euripides is trying to achieve in the Phoenissae: he is "creating. . . a dramatic pageant, presenting scene after scene for the sake of their immediate and cumulative effect, but not for the sake of an inner drama";[1] he is presenting "a play about a whole family affected by the utter selfishness of a single member";[2] it is his intention to show "the house of Oedipus. . . in its death-throes", the play being held together by "a unifying complex of imagery";[3] the play is "a series of ironic variations on a theme, a tour de force in which both the super-natural world of myth and the real world of Euripdean tragedy are each in turn exploited";[4] it is "Oedipus who provides the ultimate unity of the drama", since the action "is all immediately concerned with the working out of the curse which Oedipus laid upon his sons, the last great calamity to befall Oedipus himself";[5] "the main preoccupation of the play. . . is the investigation of the various relationships, right and wrong, to one's family and one's country".[6]

It seems that all the above suggestions are plausible to a greater or lesser degree; the enormous amount of material which Euripides puts into the play suggests that he is not concentrating solely on one particular theme. Different themes are dominant at

different points: for example, the motif of exile is prominent from the beginning of the play to line 445, whereas in the scene between Eteocles and Creon, as in that between Creon and Teiresias, the theme of σωτηρία comes to the fore. It is, however, an indisputable fact that the conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices is the central and largest episode in the play. Within the context of the working out of the curse of Oedipus in the fratricidal strife, one can discern a definite theme or concentration of interest: the conflict between τὰ ἴδια and τὰ κοινά and its implications.

Eteocles and Polyneices are first mentioned in the prologue, by Jocasta, who gives background information, saying that she bore children to Oedipus and that two of them were sons (55): Ἐτεοκλέα κλεινήν τε Πολυνείκους βίαν (56).[7] She tells the story of Oedipus' curse, of the resultant pact between the brothers to share the rulership of Thebes, and of the breaking of the agreement by Eteocles (63-83).

In the scene between Antigone and the παιδαγωγός, the remark of the latter, with regard to Polyneices and his Argive allies, is significant:

... σὺν δίκῃ ἥκουσι γῆν·
ὃ καὶ δέδοικα μὴ σκοπῶσ' ὀρθῶς θεοί. (154-55)

This is a clearcut statement of the justice of Polyneices' cause, which was implicit in Jocasta's account of Eteocles' usurpation of Polyneices' share in the kingship of their city (69 ff.). The idea that Polyneices has justice on his side is expressed also by the Chorus:

Ἄργος ὦ Πελασγικόν,
δεμαίνω τὰν σὰν ἀλκάν,

καὶ τὸ θεόθεν· οὐ γὰρ ἄδικον
εἰς ἀγῶνα τόνδ' ἔνοπλος ὁρμᾷ [παῖς]
ὃς μετέρχεται δόμους. (256-60)

When Polyneices enters (261),he is nervous. He fears treachery to the extent that he is not even sure that he can trust his mother (272); he advances with drawn sword (276) and jumps at the slightest sound. One receives the impression that he is a sensitive and highly-strung man. When Jocasta comes out of the house to meet him, she is overjoyed to be with him (306-26). Her obvious pleasure in his arrival echoes the delight which Antigone expressed when she saw Polyneices from the walls of Thebes (161-69). The fact that both Jocasta and Antigone appear to have missed Polyneices predisposes us to regard him favourably.

Polyneices replies to Jocasta's speech with a moving declaration of his trust in his mother (364-65) and his love for Thebes (358-59), dwelling reminiscently on places that are especially dear to him (366-68).[8] He sheds tears at the injustice of the situation which keeps him from his beloved home, but despite his own suffering and sense of injury, he can still pity his mother's wretchedness (371-73) and exclaim: ὡς δεινὸν ἔχθρα, μῆτερ, οἰκείων φίλων (374). As in the Antigone of Sophocles, there is a tension, an ambiguity in the words ἔχθρα and φίλων : can a φίλος ever rightly be regarded as ἔχθρος ? In the Antigone the theme is developed, with Creon and Antigone taking opposite sides. In the Phoenissae it is not developed, but it is touched on here, and Polyneices seems to recognize the wrongness of a situation in which the sanctity of the bonds of family φιλία is defiled to the extent that a φίλος

becomes ἐχθρος . When Polyneices is dying, he acknowledges the supremacy of φιλία over personal enmity, when he says of Eteocles: φίλος γὰρ ἐχθρὸς ἐγένετ', ἀλλ' ὅμως φίλος. (1446)

The full truth of Polyneices' exclamation about the horror of enmity within the family (374) is evident by the end of the play: every member of the family who appears on stage has suffered as a result of the internecine strife of the brothers. Their quarrel leads to Menocceus' heroic suicide and Creon's bereavement, their deaths cause Jocasta to kill herself, their demise leaves Creon with the power to exile Oedipus, which results in Antigone's banishment also, since she refuses to leave him.

Returning to Polyneices' speech, his tender enquiries after his father and sisters are touching (376-77), and his query as to whether Antigone and Ismene weep over his exile reveals his desire to be missed and loved by them. All in all, Polyneices does not put a foot wrong in this speech; everything he says can only evoke compassion for, and goodwill toward, him.

The dialogue which ensues between Polyneices and Jocasta on the nature of exile and on the marriage of Polyneices (385 ff.) seems somewhat laboured and artificial. It does, however, serve to drum up still more sympathy for Polyneices. It may also have contemporary relevance in that the voluntary exile of Alcibiades over the mutilation of the Herms had taken place only a few years previous to the production of the Phoenissae. And more generally, exile was a not infrequent punishment in fifth-century B.C. Athens for political and criminal offences, and there would

probably have been many members of the audience for whom the subject of the nature of exile held personal significance.

The first and only mention of Polyneices' hope of material gain is found in his response to Jocasta's question: πῶς δ' ἐξέπεισας δεῦρό σοι στρατόν; (426). Polyneices explains that Adrastus promised to restore each of his exiled sons-in-law to his own land and that his, Polyneices', turn happened to come first (427-29). He claims that he comes against Thebes ἀκουσίως (433), but that the presence of the Δαναῶν καὶ Μυκηναίων ἄκρος is a λυπρὰν χάριν, ἀναγκαίαν δὲ (430-31). This is suspicious; what ἀνάγκη can be driving him on? We are soon enlightened, as he explains:

> τὰ χρήματ' ἀνθρώποισι τιμιώτατα,
> δύναμίν τε πλείστην τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἔχει.
> ἃγὼ μεθήκω δεῦρο μυρίων ἄγων
> λόγχην· πένης γὰρ οὐδὲν εὐγενὴς ἀνήρ. (439-42)

Suddenly, Polyneices' avowed affection for Thebes and his concern for his family seem hollow, since he is prepared to destroy them in order to acquire money and power, even though this may be his due μέρος. In Euripides' treatment of Polyneices, equal stress is laid on his exile and on his due inheritance; the two ideas are counterbalanced, with the σωτηρία of his family and his state being poised in the middle.

Eteocles appears (446) and immediately the tempo of the scene changes from andante moderato to presto. He is businesslike, impatient and self-important. He cannot even spare the time or the effort to give his mother a civil greeting, but comes straight to the point and asks what he has to do. As he is so

deeply involved with arrangements for the coming battle (448-49), it is clear that he does not believe that Jocasta's attempt at reconciliation will achieve a peaceful solution. He does not use his brother's name, but refers to Polyneices contemptuously as τόνδε , against which is counterpoised μέ (451). Jocasta, a few lines later, refers to his δεινον ὄμμα καὶ θυμοῦ πνοάς (454). Within a few seconds of Eteocles' appearance on stage, it is clear that he is the more aggressive of the two brothers and that he has all the qualities that make up a typical τύραννος. Instead of Polyneices' being the "man of much strife", it is Eteocles who is the belligerent brother, and he is very far from living up to the meaning of his own name. This is brought to our attention by Eteocles' parting remark to Polyneices on the aptness of <u>his</u> name (636-37).

Jocasta tells Polyneices to speak first in the ἀγών .[9] As in the <u>Septem</u> (A. <u>Th.</u> 642-48), he bases his claim to the throne on the justice of his cause. He is reasonable; he makes no demands except that he and Eteocles return to the original agreement- that they rule jointly, a year at a time each (484-87). However, he makes it quite clear that it Eteocles does not allow him to take his turn on the throne, he will ravage Thebes (488-91). He does not want to attack his own city, but he is quite prepared to do so if his personal desires can only be achieved through violence.

Eteocles begins his defence with a flat denial of the existence of justice or equity in the world:

> νῦν δ' οὔθ' ὅμοιον οὐδὲν οὔτ' ἴσον βροτοῖς,
> πλὴν ὀνόμασι· τὸ δ' ἔργον οὐκ ἔστιν τόδε. (502-3)

As he continues, he confirms and increases the impression we have already received of him as being a typical τύραννος, virtually a caricature of a τύραννος . There is no redeeming feature in his speech. He calls Τυραννίδα , absolute power, τὴν θεῶν μεγίστην (506), and says that he would do anything to gain it. He flatly refuses to yield to Polyneices, claiming that it would be a mark of cowardice for him to do so (507-14). He says self-righteously:

χρῆν δ' αὐτὸν οὐχ ὅπλοισι τὰς διαλλαγάς,
μῆτερ, πολεῖσθαι· πᾶν γὰρ ἐξαιρεῖ λόγος
ὃ καὶ σίδηρος πολεμίων δράσοιεν ἄν. (515-17)

This attempt of Eteocles to justify his position fails dismally (and it is intended by Euripides to fail); only seconds before, he has declared that he will do anything to gain and keep absolute power and it is clear that having gained it, he will not relinquish it on any terms. He states this quite categorically at lines 519-20, and at line 523 he refers to it possessively as ἐμὴν τυραννίδα . He ends by declaring:

εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι
κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν, τἄλλα δ' εὐσεβεῖν χρεών. (524-25)

There are no shades of grey here; Euripides is portraying a man who is thoroughly wicked[10](his only redeeming feature, perhaps, is the affectionate gesture he makes to Jocasta when he is dying [1437-41], but even then, Polyneices manages more and is able to utter words of compassion for his mother, his sister and Eteocles [1442-53]). The Chorus, which commented that the things Polyneices said were σωφρονέστερα (497-98), revealing a neutral to sympathetic attitude toward his claims, condemns Eteocles' attitude in no uncertain terms:

οὐκ εὖ λέγειν χρὴ μὴ 'πὶ τοῖς ἔργοις καλοῖς·

οὐ γὰρ καλὸν τοῦτ', ἀλλὰ τῇ δίκῃ πικρόν. (526-27)

Jocasta, fulfilling a similar role to that of the Chorus in the Septem, which tries to persuade Eteocles not to face Polyneices, pleads at length with her sons, making a last desperate attempt to reconcile them (528-85). She points out to Eteocles that if he loses the battle, Thebes will pay the price of his ambitious greed (559-67). To Polyneices she says that if he captures Thebes, he will be the destroyer of his own city (571-76). Her efforts are in vain. Eteocles, quite unmoved by his mother's passionate pleas, and unaffected by the meeting with his brother, brushes aside Jocasta's appeal for a reconciliation with typical impatient brusqueness (588-92). He then turns to Polyneices and says harshly: καὶ σὺ τῶνδ' ἔξω κομίζου τειχέων, ἢ καθαιρῇ (593).

This provokes a violent and abusive exchange between the brothers (594-637), in which Eteocles is the more brutal and aggressive. In this altercation, Eteocles develops and stresses Jocasta's point that Polyneices comes as the destroyer of Thebes:

Πο. ὦ θεῶν βωμοὶ πατρῴων. Ετ. οὓς σὺ πορθήσων πάρει.
Πο. κλύετέ μου. Ετ. τίς δ' ἂν κλύοι σου πατρίδ' ἐπεστρατευμένου;
Πο. καὶ θεῶν τῶν λευκοπώλων δώματα. Ετ. ὃι στυγοῦσί σε.
Πο. ἐξελαυνόμεσθα πατρίδος. Ετ. καὶ γὰρ ἦλθες ἐξελῶν.
Πο. ἀδίκως γ', ὦ θεοί. Ετ. Μυκήνας, μὴ 'νθάδ' ἀνακάλει θεούς.
Πο. ἀνόσιος πέφυκας. Ετ. ἀλλ' οὐ πατρίδος, ὡς σύ, πολέμιος. (604-9)

And when Polyneices exclaims: ὦ καταίγνητε, the response of Eteocles is τί ταύτας ἀνακαλεῖς ἔχθιστος ὤν; [11] (617). The stress laid upon the idea that Polyneices is the enemy of Thebes indicates how significant it is to Euripides' portrayal of the two brothers and their strife. Eteocles is painted in

unrelieved black; he is unscrupulous, power-hungry, insensitive and a thoroughly bad lot. But he is the protector of Thebes (albeit purely in his own interest). Polyneices is portrayed as a much more sympathetic character. He has been wronged, and wishes to right that wrong. He claims to love Thebes. But he comes as the enemy of his country. Thus, despite the sympathetic portrayal of Polyneices, Euripides makes it clear that both brothers are guilty- Eteocles for usurping power in a tyrannical fashion, and Polyneices for attacking his fatherland.

Why does Euripides treat Polyneices so gently if he too is culpable? If Polyneices were presented as unfavourably as Eteocles is, his violent plans against Thebes would simply be in keeping with the rest of his wickedness. As it is, they stand out in stark contrast to his otherwise rather favourable portrayal, and Euripides is able to make the point that no matter how just one's cause may seem to be, there are no circumstances which justify coming against one's fatherland: personal ambition must be subordinated to the common good.[12]

In Polyneices' final speech he declares: κἂν τἀ σοὶ, πόλις, γένηται, μὴ ἐμέ, τόνδε δ' αἰτιῶ·(629). He concludes with the lines:

ἐλπίδες δ' οὔπω καθεύδουσ', αἷς πέποιθα σὺν θεοῖς
τόνδ' ἀποκτείνας κρατήσειν τῆσδε Θηβαίας χθονός. (634-5)

Polyneices tries to justify his aggression against Thebes by putting the blame for it on his brother, but his obvious sense of guilt makes us all the more aware that he is guilty, and the lines serve not to exculpate him, but to remind us that it is Thebes and the Theban people who are going to suffer as a result of the fraternal strife.

In the scene between Creon and Eteocles (697-783), certain characteristics of Eteocles emerge and others are reinforced. The emphatic position, and indeed the very presence, of ἐμούς at the end of line 696 stresses Eteocles' possessive and autocratic attitude to the rulership of Thebes. His brusque impatience and lack of feeling reveal themselves once more; he dismisses the whole meeting with Jocasta and Polyneices in one brief utterance:

πολλῷ γὰρ ἦρον ἐνδεέστερος διαλλαγάς
ὡς ἐς λόγους συνῆψε Πολυνείκει μολών. (701-2)

By comparison with the cautious Creon, he shows himself to be a foolishly reckless military leader, lacking in foresight and having little capacity for strategy (710 ff.).[13]

The treatment of Eteocles by Euripides here contrasts sharply with Aeschylus's presentation of him in the Septem, where Eteocles' military efficiency and his competence as the defender of Thebes is stressed. However, Eteocles' military ability in the Septem is relevant to the play as a whole (see p. 34), whereas this is not the case in the Phoenissae. Perhaps, the characterization of Eteocles is not Euripides' main concern in the scene between the young king and Creon. He could be using the encounter between Eteocles and his uncle to mount a martial debate on the qualities necessary to a general who wishes to lead his army to victory. This would have particular contemporary relevance in view, for example, of the difference of opinion that existed between Alcibiades and Nicias in 415 B.C. on the subject of the Sicilian expedition- Alcibiades being in favour of supporting the Segestans in their appeal for help against Selinus, and the more cautious Nicias pointing out the risks and the cost

of such an expedition and advising against it.[14] And such debates, so long as generals acted in groups, must have occurred frequently.

In making the arrangements for Antigone's betrothal to Haemon (757-60), Eteocles takes upon himself the duty and privilege of his father; as far as he is concerned, Oedipus does not count for anything anymore. He makes this quite clear in the next three lines, when he says of his father:

πατὴρ δ' ἐς αὐτὸν ἀραθέων ὀφλισκάνει,
ὄψιν τυφλώσας· οὐκ ἄγαν ὀφ' ἑπήνεσα·
ἥρᾶς δ' ἀρᾶσιν ἣν τύχῃ, κατακτενεῖ. (763-65)

With his attitude to Oedipus, may be contrasted that of Polyneices, who seems to be concerned about and fond of his father (376-77; 614). It must be remembered, however, that both Eteocles and Polyneices shut their father in the palace and that Oedipus cursed both his sons.[15] Here, as in the Oedipus Coloneus, Polyneices is presented sympathetically, but in neither play are we allowed to forget his past misdeeds.

Creon informs Eteocles that the enemy has chosen seven men to lead companies against the seven gates of Thebes, and he advises the young king to pick a corresponding number of leaders with troops to oppose them (737-41). Eteocles agrees to do so, adding:

ὄνομα δ' ἑκάστου διατριβὴ πολλὴ λέγειν,
ἐχθρῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῖς τείχεσιν καθημένων. (751-52)

This seems to be a jibe directed at Aeschylus by Euripides, as the central section of the Septem is taken up in just the way Euripides shuns. Descriptions of the champions on both sides would indeed be no more than διατριβὴ πολλὴ for Euripides, since it is

the interrelation of the brothers and their relationship to the city that interests him. In the Septem, however, the Redepaare scene is an integral part of the drama, for- whether one believes that Eteocles appointed the champions before or during the scene with the Scout (see pp. 25-27)- it shows Eteocles advancing to meet his inexorable doom.

Eteocles tells Creon to consult Teiresias, saying:

σοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἡδὺς ἐς λόγους ἀφίξεται,
ἐγὼ δὲ τέχνην μαντικὴν ἐμεμψάμην
ἤδη πρὸς αὐτόν, ὥστε μοι μορφὰς ἔχειν. (771-73)

This is a neat touch on the part of Euripides, for not only does it explain why Creon and not Eteocles himself consults Teiresias,[16] but it also adds to the unfavourable portrait of Eteocles. What Eteocles says about Teiresias' dislike of him is borne out by the prophet himself (865-66). Interestingly, though, further on in his speech Teiresias says that both the sons of Oedipus came to hate him for his warnings to them (878-79)- another subtle criticism of Polyneices perhaps?

Eteocles prepares to set out to battle, claiming δίκη (whose existence he previously denied) as his ally, and praying to Εὐλάβεια, "the most helpful deity", to protect the city (780-83). This is supreme irony- Eteocles is counting on Εὐλάβεια to do what he will not, and his only reason for wanting the city to be protected is so that he may be victorious over his brother and retain the throne of Thebes.

In the Creon-Menoeceus episode, the state-family theme, which is worked out in the conflict between the sons of Oedipus, is treated also with reference to the collateral branch of the Theban

royal House, the family of Creon. This episode has been criticized as lacking direct relevance to the play,[17] but if one recognizes it as a corollary to the fraternal strife of Eteocles and Polyneices, it is far from being irrelevant: Menoeceus' true and selfless love of his country, which leads him to give up his life willingly to ensure its salvation, is contrasted with the selfish personal ambitions of Eteocles and Polyneices.[18] It has been pointed out that the tension between the concepts of personal ambition and public interest, and the right relationship of the former to the latter, were being formulated from around 411 B.C. (the Phoenissae was staged between 411 and 409 B.C.), under the influence of the careers of Alcibiades and of the leading oligarchs of 411 B.C.; it has been suggested that the Phoenissae reflects Euripides' concern with the problem, and his alarm at the subordination of the state to the personal desires of men like Polyneices and Eteocles.[19]

In the scene of the battle between the brothers, reported by the Messenger (1356 ff.), Polyneices and Eteocles are portrayed as wild beasts:

> κάπροι δ' ὅπως θήγοντες ἀγρίων γένυν
> ξυνῆψαν, ἀφρῷ διάβροχοι γενειάδας· (1380-81).

This animal imagery applied to the brothers, which reaches its climax here, occurs several times in the play. When Polyneices makes his appearance, he is afraid μή με δικτύων ἔσω / λαβόντες οὐκ ἐκφρῶσ' ἀναίμακτον χρόα (263-64); he tells Jocasta that he and Tydeus won Adrastus' daughters in marriage, because they were identified with the lion and the boar mentioned to him in an oracle (411-23); Creon uses the word θηρώμενος to describe

his search for Eteocles (699); in the fourth stasimon, the Chorus refers to Eteocles and Polyneices as δίδυμοι θῆρες (1296); Antigone tells of how Jocasta found her sons at the city gates ὥστε λέοντας ἐνκύλους(1573).[20] By portraying the brothers in this way, Euripides conveys not only their fierce, unrestrained violence toward each other, but also their moral weakness- like animals, their own wants are uppermost in their minds, and they are prepared to fight to achieve their desires, irrespective of the effect on others.

In the Septem, the rights and wrongs of the quarrelling brothers are not revealed to us; although Polyneices claims that Δίκη is on his side, we cannot be sure if this is the case (see pp. 27-28). In the Phoenissae, however, it is made very clear that justice lies with Polyneices, although, as in the Septem (A. Th. 580-86), he is censured for coming against his fatherland. The question of δίκη on the human level is prominent in the Phoenissae, which it is not in the Septem, because Euripides, unlike Aeschylus, uses the interaction of characters to express the working-out of Oedipus' curse. In the Septem, the curse is conceived of as an objective force, the Erinys, but Euripides in the Phoenissae interprets it subjectively or psychologically, as erinys rather than the Erinys. The question of δίκη is used by Euripides to show how the ἔρις of the brothers brings about the fulfilment of the curse: because Polyneices has justice on his side in the quarrel with Eteocles, he believes that he has the right (if not the duty) to seek redress for the wrong that has been done to him; because Eteocles feels that he can justly claim to be defending Thebes against an enemy, he joins battle with his brother and the Argives.

Although the action of the drama is fully motivated in human terms, references to the divine will of the gods occur at various points to remind us of the underlying role of fate, in which δίκη does not necessarily play a part.[21] In the prologue (17 ff.), Jocasta stresses that the troubles of the House of Laius are a punishment from the gods for Laius' disobedience, and τύχη in some form occurs at significant points in her narrative (49-50, 64-65, 66). In the first epeisodion (261 ff.), Jocasta twice refers to the doom inflicted by the gods (350-53, 379-82). When Eteocles and Polyneices have decided to meet each other in combat, Jocasta cries: πατρὸς οὐ φεύξεσθ' Ἐρινῦς, to which Eteocles replies: ἐρρέτω πρόπας δόμος(624). We are here reminded strongly both of the curse of Oedipus on his sons and of the divinely ordained destruction of the royal House of Laius. In the scene between Creon and the seer Teiresias, inevitably, the divine perspective is emphasised: the soothsayer traces the troubles of the House from the time when Laius disobeyed the gods and fathered Oedipus (867 ff.), he refers to Polyneices and Eteocles as δαιμονῶντας (888), and speaks of the necessity of Menoeceus' death in terms of τύχη (914).

Thus, although the divine dimension is kept in the background in the Phoenissae, the action and motivation on the human level ultimately coincide with the inevitability of the gods' will, expressed in terms of Ἔρις, Ἄτη, τύχη, Ἐρινύς.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Kitto (1961) p. 353.

[2]Webster (1967) p. 219.

[3]Podlecki (TAPhA 1962) p. 356.

[4]Conacher (1967) p. 245.

[5]Grube (1941) pp. 354, 370.

[6]Rawson (GRBS 1970) p. 112.

[7]The epithets used here by Jocasta to describe her sons may perhaps indicate some partiality on her part for Eteocles and some criticism of Polyneices, but if this is the case at the beginning of the play, it does not seem to be so when both men are before her. More probably, the labelling of the brothers in this fashion was a traditional periphrasis in the Homeric style; in the Septem the phrase πολυνεύκους βίᾳ(ν) occurs twice (A. Th. 577, 641).

[8]The reference by Polyneices to specific areas of Thebes may in part have been intended by the dramatist to establish the location of the scene, bearing in mind the broad spatial sweep of the play.

[9]Page (1938) on E. Med. 465 ff. says: "Medea in this passage is the only exception to Euripides' rule that in these scenes of quarrel the 'sympathetic' character speaks second. . . ." Clearly, the speech of Medea does not stand alone in this respect; Polyneices' speech in the Phoenissae (469 ff.) must be added to it.

[10]Odysseus, in the prologue to S. Ph. (produced in 409 B.C. and therefore of the same period as the Phoenissae), reveals himself to be similarly unscrupulous, when he declares to Neoptolemus that it is worth being wicked to gain success (79 ff.).

[11]Rawson (GRBS 1970) p. 116 remarks: "Eteocles' naked ambition for 'tyranny' or power excludes even the most superficial claim to love of country; but he can lay his finger on the weak point in Polyneices' case- that he is coming 'to lay waste the land' (511)."

[12]de Romilly (RPh 1965) p. 31 comments on Euripides' treatment of the brothers: ". . . en vertu d'un redressement extraordinaire par rapport à toute la tradition, et surtout par rapport à Eschyle, Euripide a fait de Polynice le plus sympathique des deux freres et le plus attaché à son pays. . . . S'il voulait que les deux fils eussent part égale dans cette lutte, it fallait accumuler en faveur de Polynice tout ce qui devait contrebalancer sa présence à la tête des armées ennemies et sa vieille culpabilité."

[13]Blaiklock (1952) p. 199 comments: "Eteocles is all noise and incompetence" and "Creon's wise and slightly timid counsel sets the younger man's rash and hasty improvisations in high relief and sharpens the contrast between wisdom and foolishness."

[14]Th. 5. 8-25.

[15]See Rawson (GRBS 1970) p. 116.

[16]On the technical level, the three-actor "rule" may be behind this, i.e., if the same actor were used for the part of Teiresias

and for that of Eteocles, the two characters could not converse together on stage.

[17]See, for example, Haigh (1968) p. 311.

[18]See de Romilly (GRBS 1970) p. 33.

[19]Ibid. pp. 36-41, where it is suggested that there is in Euripides' writing an evolution in his political thinking parallel to that found in Thucydides and Aristophanes. De Romilly p. 41 concludes, with regard to the Phoenissae: "La tragédie, en somme, ne fait pas seulement allusion à des événements [e.g. the proximity of Polyneices' army to Thebes being a reminder of the Spartan army encamped at Decelea]: elle exprime une pensée que les événements ont peu à peu fait naître et dont on peut suivre l'histoire, avec son rythme, presque année par année."

[20]See Podlecki (TAPhA 1962) pp. 362-67, who notes other animal imagery in the play concerning the Sphinx and the dragon which Cadmus slew.

[21]See Conacher (1967) pp. 233 ff. , who sees in the Phoenissae "a series of paradoxical confrontations of the world of myth (in which the pattern of events is determined by some external and supernatural force) and the 'real' world of Euripidean drama, where events are usually presented as the result of human passions and human folly."

IV. POLYNEICES IN THE OEDIPUS COLONEUS

In Aeschylus' Septem and in Euripides' Phoenissae, the conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices is central to the drama. This is not the case in Sophocles' Oedipus Coloneus, in which Oedipus is the character on whom the dramatist's interest is concentrated and around whom the action of the play revolves. The strife between Eteocles and Polyneices is important to the Coloneus only insofar as it leads to the cursing of Polyneices by Oedipus; once this has been done, Polyneices' part is over, and our attention is once more directed completely toward Oedipus. The characterization of Polyneices in the Oedipus Coloneus, therefore, must be seen in relation to the presentation of his father, not in relation to that of his brother, as is the case in the Phoenissae.

Before the encounter of Polyneices and Oedipus takes place, the neglect of their father by Eteocles and Polyneices, and Oedipus' resultant hatred of his sons, is repeatedly stressed and stands in contrast to the unswerving devotion of Antigone and Ismene, whom Oedipus loves deeply (see p. 81). There are no shades of grey in Oedipus' feelings toward his children; his love and his hatred are equally absolute.

The difference in attitude of Oedipus toward his daughters and his sons is revealed in the scenes of reunion. When Ismene comes from Thebes to bring him the new oracle (324 ff.), Oedipus is inarticulate with the joy of having her with him again. When Antigone and Ismene are restored to him by Theseus after being kidnapped by Creon (1099 ff.), he clasps them to him lovingly,

calling them ὦ φιλταθ' ἑρπὴ (1108) and ὦ σκῆπτρα φωτός (1109). When, on the other hand, Oedipus hears that Polyneices wishes to see him, he wants nothing to do with him (1173-74; 1176-79), and, having been prevailed upon to hear him, he utters no word of greeting and listens in silence to what Polyneices has to say (1271)[1] before issuing his terrible curse.

The awful violence of the curse has troubled critics of the play and some have tried to explain Oedipus' ruthlessness by looking for signs of hypocrisy, selfishness and insensitivity in Polyneices' speeches.[2] Flaws can most certainly be detected in Polyneices in the scene with his father, but these immediate failings cannot be held responsible for Oedipus' curse, since Sophocles takes pains to present Polyneices sympathetically just before, during, and immediately following his encounter with his father (although his neglect of Oedipus anterior to the play's action hovers in the background).

The position of Polyneices and Eteocles in relation to the rulership of Thebes is not clearly established by Sophocles, as critics have frequently noted.[3] In lines 367 ff., the implication is that Creon has been in power since Oedipus' exile and that Polyneices and Eteocles have never ruled Thebes. The word ἔρις in line 367 (present in the MSS, but frequently emended to ἔρως by editors, including Jebb) is interesting, however, as it suggests that either there was rivalry of some sort between the two brothers or that there was rivalry between the brothers and Creon from the time that Oedipus first left the throne of Thebes vacant. From lines 427 ff., we gather that the sons might have prevented their father's exile, had they so wished. In lines 599-

600, Oedipus claims that his sons were jointly responsible for driving him from Thebes, but, in lines 1354 ff., Oedipus blames Polyneices alone for his exile, which is supposed to have taken place when Polyneices was king. These shifts in emphasis can be accounted for by Sophocles' desire to give the maximum dramatic impact to Oedipus' curse, by causing him to launch it at the one son who is present and to hold that son solely responsible for the injury done to him.[4] The play is about Oedipus and the dramatic function of Polyneices is principally to provoke Oedipus' curse.

In the Septem and the Phoenissae, Oedipus' curse on his sons and the curse of the gods on the House of Labdacus operate together to bring about the strife and, ultimately, the doom of the brothers. In the Coloneus, however, Oedipus delivers a curse after the between the brothers has already broken out (421 ff.). He refers to their πεπρωμένην ἔριν (422) and in lines 1298-99, Polyneices expresses the belief that the curse on the royal House of Thebes has been at the root of his conflict with Eteocles. It seems, then, as though the curse on the family sets the strife of the brothers in motion, but it is Oedipus' final curse, coming later (1370 ff.), which ensures their mutual slaughter.

Oedipus does not wish to hear or see Polyneices (1177-78), but he is persuaded to do so by Theseus and Antigone. Theseus reminds him of the religious respect which a suppliant should command (1179-80), and Antigone pleads for her brother in the name of family φιλία (1181-1203). Neither Theseus nor Antigone attempts to justify Polyneices' past conduct toward his father, but the fact that two characters whom we have been led to view favourably

in the course of the play should support Polyneices at all, might tend to dispose us to be sympathetic toward him,[5] although the speeches of Antigone and Creon are to some extent occasions for rhetorical display.

By casting Polyneices in the role of defenceless suppliant, ἀνδρῶν γε μολόντος(1250), Sophocles contrasts him favourably with Creon who came to Oedipus in arrogance, οὐκ ἄνευ πομπῶν (723). There are obvious parallels between Creon and Polyneices: each interprets the oracle about Oedipus to suit himself, each wants to use Oedipus to further his own political ends, each is rejected and cursed by Oedipus. However, there are as many differences as there are similarities between Creon and Polyneices, and the differences are significant, as they show up Polyneices in a favourable light by contrast with his uncle.

The contrast in manner and bearing between the two men is marked and is comparable to the contrast between Odysseus and Neoptolemus in Sophocles' Philoctetes, which was produced in 409 B.C. and is, therefore, like the Coloneus, one of Sophocles' late compositions. Creon is confident, a polished orator, a wily politician and a decitful man. He pretends to have come in peace to see Oedipus, but when things do not go his way, he resorts to the force which he disclaimed (732), abducting Antigone and Ismene.[6] He disguises his polictical motive for wanting Oedipus to return and pretends that he wishes to restore Oedipus to his home in Thebes (755-60), which we know from Ismene's report he can have no intention of doing (399-407). Oedipus denounces him as a hypocrite and a scoundrel (761-99).

With Polyneices it is different. Upon his entry, he is immediately struck by the wretched condition of his father. His awkward, jerky introductory speech (1254-79) differs sharply from Creon's composed address. He begins by dwelling with somewhat tactless horror upon Oedipus' unkempt appearance, commenting on his filthy squalor (1256-63). These tasteless comments upon Oedipus' unfortunate condition have been commonly construed as an indication of Polyneices' lack of feeling and insincerity.[7] At the other extreme, it has been claimed that Polyneices is genuinely penitent and that his penitence has nothing to do with self-interest.[8] A compromise between these extreme views would probably be the most accurate interpretation of Polyneices' reaction to his father's plight. He is apprehensive about confronting Oedipus, thrown off balance by his father's pitiable appearance, and perhaps struck by sudden feelings of guilt- hence he blurts out his horror, which, in a more controlled moment, he might have kept to himself. But he thinks of his father's wretchedness only when he needs his help, so in that sense he is not entirely altruistic in his expression of compassion.[9]

He admits that he has treated Oedipus badly, and he asks his father to forgive him (1267-70). His discomfiture increases as an ominous silence grows between them and Oedipus persists in saying nothing. Polyneices pleads with his father to speak to him (1272-74), and when this draws no response from Oedipus,he asks his sisters, almost desperately, to intercede with their father on his behalf (1275-79). Polyneices is pitiable here; he is shaken, uneasy and completely vulnerable before Oedipus.

He introduces the idea of ἀτιμία twice, when he begs his father not to send him away dishonoured (1273, 1278). This echoes the earlier pleas of the suppliant Oedipus (49-50, 285-86), and may inspire the feeling that Oedipus, who was well treated as a suppliant, ought to be correspondingly benevolent toward his son. However, the idea of ἀτιμία was also expressed by Oedipus in his description of his sons' treatment of him (428), and it is a reminder of the great wrong that Polyneices has done his father.[10] The Greeks cherished the idea of filial piety, and a son was expected to respect and to obey his father, and to care for him in his old age. In Sophocles Antigone, Creon, addressing Haemon, expresses a sentiment, which, leaving aside the circumstances, would probably echo the feelings of the audience:

οὕτω γάρ, ὦ παῖ, χρὴ διὰ στέρνων ἔχειν,
γνώμης πατρώας πάντ' ὄπισθεν ἑσπόμενα. (639-40)

Thus, when Polyneices raises the question of ἀτιμία, it may be intended to temper our sympathy for him rather than to increase it.

At Antigone's prompting, Polyneices continues, his insecurity made apparent by his beginning with the reminder that he is a suppliant and is therefore not to be harmed (1285-90). He explains that he was driven out of Thebes by Eteocles, his younger brother (1295-96). By making Polyneices the older brother in contrast to Euripides' portrayal of him in the Phoenissae, where he is younger than Eteocles (E. Ph. 71-72), Sophocles gives some justification for Polyneices' proposed assault on Thebes. This is a firm pointer to us that we are to view the cause of the older, and apparently less aggressive, brother[11] with some sympathy.

Polyneices tells of his marriage to the daughter of Adrastus.

He lists in full the allies he has gained as a result of the union (1301-22), a catalogue which has earned for Sophocles the accusation of senile garrulity.[12] Polyneices is long-winded in his speech, but this need not be an indication of senile decay on Sophocles' part. Oedipus has said nothing to Polyneices, so Polyneices keeps talking, too much perhaps, but he is undoubtedly nervous and dismayed at Oedipus' silence. Maybe he lists his companions to impress Oedipus, or perhaps he is trying to reassure himself, or maybe it is simply that Sophocles, like Aeschylus and Euripides, is following epic tradition. Although the charge of senility is undoubtedly unjustified, it may be observed that the idea of old age is prominent in the play- Oedipus is old, Creon is old (733), the members of the Chorus are old, the third stasimon (1211-48) deals with the miseries of old age- which lends support to the idea that there is an autobiographical element in the play.

Polyneices' own name completes the list of allies, and he describes himself rather pathetically as:

ἐγὼδὲσός, κεἰμὴσός, ἀλλὰτοῦκακοῦ
πότρουφυτευθείς, σός γέτοικαλούμενος.... (1323-24)

There is still no word from Oedipus. Polyneices finally comes to the point and asks Oedipus to return to Thebes, so that, according to the oracle, he may be victorius over Eteocles. His direct approach is diametrically opposed to Creon's hypocrisy, and his honesty is attractive. He, like Creon, promises to re-establish Oedipus in his former home (755-58; 1342), but whereas Oedipus exposed Creon as a liar and a fraud (784-86), there is no reason to suppose that Polyneices' offer is similarly insincere, and Oedipus does not accuse him of duplicity.[13]

Polyneices is treated gently by Sophocles, but, despite this sympathetic portrayal (or perhaps because of it), the deficiencies of character which revealed themselves in his behaviour toward Oedipus in the first place- his moral weakness and his lack of understanding- are still in evidence. He sees Oedipus' pitiful condition and appears to be moved by it, but he gives no indication that his desire to take Oedipus back to Thebes is motivated by love or concern for his father. Polyneices desires to seize power and since he can do so only with his father's co-operation, he will make use of Oedipus to further his own ends.[14]

His lack of understanding is shown in his belief that he has even a chance of persuading a man like Oedipus, whose sense of τὸ γενναῖον is so profound, to acquiesce in his plans, and that Oedipus would consider blotting out the memory of past wrongs done to him in order to aid Polyneices in a power struggle against his own brother. He is blind to Oedipus' noble nature and, in his lack of perception, he thinks, he thinks that Oedipus is susceptible to persuasion on his own level.[15]

For Oedipus, nothing Polyneices says or does can right the old wrong; his hatred is absolute and inflexible and he issues his terrible curse against his sons. Whereas Creon responded to Oedipus' curse with abusive argument (800 ff.), which culminated in the abduction of Oedipus' daughters, his σκῆπτρα (818 f.), Polyneices, by contrast, accepts his father's curse and makes no attempt to oppose it (1399-1413).

In his presentation of Polyneices after the curse, Sophocles makes every attempt to inspire pity for him. His uncomplaining

acceptance of his fate, his determination to carry on to meet his doom (1402-4, 1416-19, 1422ff.), his affection for his sisters (1415, 1444-46)- all these things evoke our sympathy.[16] Sophocles draws out the tender parting between brother and sister partly in order to squeeze every ounce of emotion out of the situation and to leave us feeling that if Antigone can love Polyneices dearly, he cannot be entirely bad. But more than this, he has to show why Polyneices decides to continue with his attack on Thebes despite the curse, and this exchange between Antigone and Polyneices brings out the character traits in him which make his decision credible[17]: his pride in his generalship (1418-19; 1429-30) and his shame at having been exiled by his younger brother (1422-23).

One may ask why Sophocles takes pains to present Polyneices sympathetically, why he does not make him the neglectful, selfish, unfeeling son that he has shown himself to be to Oedipus in the past. Partly this is because Sophocles did not conceive of his characters in terms of types but presented them as fully rounded, life-like people- wicked, perhaps, like Polyneices, but not all bad; noble, like Oedipus, but not perfect. More importantly, in terms of the play itself, for Oedipus's curse to have its full impact, Polyneices must be presented sympathetically. If Oedipus cursed a son who seemed to us thoroughly wicked, there would be little dramatic interest, as Polyneices would seem to have received his just desserts. But by giving Polyneices some endearing traits, Sophocles forces us to consider more carefully the nature of Oedipus' character, curse and "apotheosis".

FOOTNOTES

[1]See Meautis (1957) p. 160.

[2]For example, Adams (1957) pp. 173-74.

[3]For example, Kitto (1961) p. 390.

[4]Ibid. p. 390; Easterling (PCPhS 1967), p. 9, note 1.

[5]Easterling (PCPhS 1967) p. 1.

[6]For the antithesis of persuasion and force, see S. Ph.

[7]See, for example, Adams (1957) p. 173: "The hypocrisy of his professions of pity is established in our minds by the unfeeling language he employs. . . ."

[8]See Bowra (1944) p. 325.

[9]See Webster (1936) p. 74: "He is truly shocked at his father's condition, but has never considered it until he needs his father's aid." Also, Linforth (UCPCPh 1951) pp. 157-58.

[10]See Easterling (PCPhS 1967) p. 7 and note.

[11]Lesky (1978) p. 128 comments: "Sophocles, in his characterisation of the two brothers, clearly follows Euripides, who in his Phoenician Women turns the 'brawler' of the old saga into a person who had been unjustly driven out by Eteocles."

[12]So Masqueray (1924) pp. 152-53.

[13]See Burian (Phoenix 1974) p. 424: "Polynices has been rejected by Thebes (1298) and is attempting to conquer her. He need hardly respect the earlier decision to keep Oedipus outside her borders after Oedipus had helped him to regain power." But cf. Adams (1957) p. 174.

[14]See Easterling (PCPhS 1967) p. 8.

[15]See Reinhardt (1979) p. 218; Whitman (1951) pp. 210-11.

[16]See Webster (1936) p. 74; Whitman p. 211.

[17]See Jebb (1885) on 1414-46.

PART II: THE SISTERS

CHAPTER V: ANTIGONE AND ISMENE IN THE *SEPTEM*, THE *PHOENISSAE* AND THE *OEDIPUS COLONEUS*

CHAPTER VI: ANTIGONE IN SOPHOCLES' *ANTIGONE* AND IN EURIPIDES' *ANTIGONE*

V. ANTIGONE AND ISMENE IN THE SEPTEM, THE PHOENISSAE AND THE OEDIPUS COLONEUS

Septem

Antigone and Ismene do not appear in the Septem until they are introduced at line 861 by the Chorus, which is lamenting over the corpses of Eteocles and Polyneices. In lines 961-1004, they mourn the death of their brothers in a lyric kommos, a conventional θρῆνος, which reveals nothing about the character or personality of the girls.

In the final scene, a Herald enters to announce that Eteocles is to be buried with due honour, but that the body of Polyneices is to be thrown unburied outside the city. Antigone refuses to accept the decree and insists that she will bury her brother.

There has been much scholarly debate about this last part of the play: was it the work of Aeschylus himself, or did a later producer introduce the sisters under the influence of Sophocles' Antigone?[1] There is not even agreement as to how much of the last part of the play may be spurious. The main arguments against its authenticity are as follows:

(a) The Septem was the final drama in a trilogy, and the last play in a trilogy would be unlikely to end with the introduction of a new theme (the burial of Polyneices by Antigone) that could not be resolved. Besides, in lines 959-60, the Chorus states quite definitely that the troubles of the House have come to an end: . . . δυοῖν κρατήσας ἔλῃξε δαίμων. We find indications that the House falls with the fratricide in lines 689-91,

720-21, 895-96, 954-55 (see pp. 33-34).

(b) Antigone and Ismene are already on stage when the Herald enters. There would thus be three speaking actors present at once in the last scene. It is unlikely that Aeschylus had adopted the third actor as early as 467 B.C. when the Septem was produced. The hypothesis of a lacuna, where the Chorus sang an ode while Ismene retired to change into the Herald's costume, is unsatisfactory.[2]

(c) Although some of the language in the suspect passages is good Aeschylean Greek (certainly if there were an interpolator, he knew his Aeschylus well), there has been much criticism of various points of style and usage, especially in the anapaests which introduce Antigone and Ismene (861-74).[3]

(d) The expressions δήμου προβούλοις(1006), Καδμείων προστάταις(1026), δῆμος (1044), πολιτῶν (1061), πόλις (1030, 1042, 1046,1066, 1070, 1072) pose problems, since they emphasise the democratic nature of the governement of Thebes in a play which deals with the conflict of two contenders for the monarchy. It is conceivable that after the death of the brothers, a βουλή of Elders took control of the state as an interim measure,[4] but the repeated insistence on the political power of the δῆμος in some sixty lines "is strangely at variance with the rest of the play."[5]

The evidence against the authenticity of the section from line 1005 to the end of the play is strong enough for one to be able to reject the passage with some confidence (although, in the absence

of sufficient objective evidence, it would be unwise to dismiss it absolutely and categorically[6]). If it is allowed that these lines are the work of an interpolator, the only places in the play where the sisters appear are in lines 861-74 and in lines 961-1004, and one is forced to reconsider their presence in, and the authenticity of, these passages.

The style of the anapaests with which the Chorus introduces the sisters is, as has been noted above, very poor, and the lines are problematic in other ways as well. The sisters enter inconveniently, just as the Chorus is about to sing a lament (854-60). The Chorus voices the expectation that the sisters will express their grief in a fitting manner (864-65), but goes on to add:

ἥρᾱς δὲ δίκη πρότερον φήρης
τὸν δυσκέλαδόν θ' ὕμνον Ἐριννυος
ἄχεῖν Ἀΐδα τ'
ἐχθρὸν παιᾶν' ἐπιμέλπειν. (866-70)

If the Chorus sings the whole ode, why are the sisters brought on to stand about, doing nothing?[7] On the other hand, if part of the ode is sung by the sisters,[8] one might agree with Page's observation: vix credible videtur. . . nihil inesse quod sororibus unice conveniat.[9] It appears that the anapaests should be removed from the text for both linguistic and dramatic reasons; any attempt to justify their inclusion seems to necessitate special pleading.[10]

We are left with the sisters singing the lyric stichomythia of lines 961-1004. Whereas there is no indication in the content of lines 875-960 which would suggest that any of them were sung by

Antigone and/or Ismene, in the stichomythia, lines 996-97 clearly belong to the sisters. Does this mean either that the sisters must appear here and nowhere else in the Septem, or does it mean that the whole passage (961-1004) is the work of an interpolator? Probably neither. The passage as a whole is very Aeschylean, and is paralleled in form and content by the ending of the Persae. Lloyd-Jones, while defending the authenticity of lines 996-97, admits that they "form two isolated dochmiac metra";[11] therefore, although they are not necessarily spurious because of this, they can be disposed of.[12] It has been observed that the lines were probably inserted by the interpolater because he wanted to have something in the exchange which would be suitable only for the sisters, and that he was only capable of making the insertion at a place where he need not concern himself with responsion.[13]

It would seem, then, that the lyric stichomythia should be retained and reassigned to the divided Chorus, eliminating lines 996-97 and thus entirely dispensing with the sisters in the play.

Phoenissae

Taking the play as we have it, we find Antigone in three scenes: one with the old slave (88-201), one with Jocasta (1264-82), and one with Oedipus and Creon (1485 ff.).

In the τειχοσκοπία , she is portrayed as an eager young girl, excited at the sight of the gleaming, bronze-clad army below her, curious about the various chieftains, and delighted at the sight of Polyneices, her long-lost brother. She is naïve about the implications for herself and for Thebes of the fraternal strife: she prays that Artemis and Atalanta, the mother of Parthenopaeus,

may destroy that warrior ὃς ἐπ' ἐμὰν πόλιν ἔβα πέρασων(151-53), but she expresses only affection for Polyneices (161-69), apparently not realizing that he too is attacking her city.

The brief scene with Jocasta adds little to our picture of Antigone, except that we note her modesty. Clearly, she has been repeatedly told that she must behave according to her position as a royal princess and keep herself away from the public view (92-95, 193 ff.), and the sudden command of her mother, telling her to do just the opposite, comes as a shock to her. To some extent, however, the idea of feminine modesty was a conventional one.[14]

Before Oedipus appears, Antigone sings a monody over her dead brothers (1485-1539). The theme of her song of woe is the ἄτη of the House of Oedipus. Antigone traces back the trouble of the family to the day when Oedipus solved the riddle of the Sphinx (1504-7), but there is no censure of Oedipus in her account of the resultant afflictions; clearly, she feels only sympathy for her father (1508-13).

She calls Oedipus out of the palace, emphasising his age and infirmity,[15] which are stressed also in the opening lines of Oedipus himself (1539-45). The insistence upon his blindness, frailty and old age (although, in fact, he cannot have been much more than forty years old) increases the pathos of his belated banishment from Thebes. The image of Antigone guiding Oedipus into the light (1539-40), and later leading him into exile (1710 ff.), creates a parallel with Teiresias, who, in the Phoenissae (834), is led by his daughter, although elsewhere it is a boy who guides him.[16] Antigone's presentation in this scene with Oedipus is

both parallel to, and an inversion of, her portrayal in the τειχοσκοπία: in both scenes she is associated with an old man, but in the earlier scene, unlike in the scene with Oedipus, it is the old slave who is in control and Antigone who is given a helping hand (103-106).

Antigone tells her father briefly of the fate of his sons and his wife, to which Oedipus' first reaction is ὤμοι ἐμῶν παθέων· (1551)- the egotist of the Oedipus Tyrannus lives on. Only after he has exclaimed over his own suffering does he ask how his sons and his wife died. Antigone answers his question gently and sympathetically (1555-59); she does not reproach him for his curse, but tells him that it was the cause of his sons' death, adding a compassionate ὦ πάτερ, ὤ μοι . At her father's request, Antigone tells him of Jocasta's death, ending with the lines:

> πάντα δ' ἐν ἄρματι τῷδε συναγάγεν,
> ὦ πάτερ, ἀμετέροισι δόμοισιν ἄχη θεὸς ὃς
> τάδε τελευτᾷ. (1579-81)

This is a strong reminder that, although the conflict between the brothers and the consequent suffering of the Theban royal House are presented in terms of human rather than divine motivation, the occurrence and the outcome of the fraternal strife ultimately coincide with the will of the gods. (see p. 55).

Before Oedipus can comment on Antigone's account of his wife's end, Creon suddenly appears. He banishes Oedipus, announces his inheritance of the kingship of Thebes from Eteocles (a piece of political opportunism, since there is no-one to contradict him[17]), and declares that Antigone is to marry Haemon (1584-91). He ends

his speech with an awkward sort of apology to Oedipus for exiling him (1592-94), which is consistent with the diffidence he displayed earlier, in the scene with Eteocles. However, he remains obdurate in the face of Oedipus' misery at his exile; he insists that Oedipus will live no longer on Theban soil (1625-26). He then orders the body of Polyneices to be cast out of the city and to be left unburied, commanding it to be proclaimed to the citizens:

ὃς ἂν νεκρὸν τόνδ' ἢ κατακτέφων ἁλῷ
ἢ γῇ καλύπτων, θάνατον ἀνταλλάξεται. (1632-33)

Creon reiterates that Antigone is to marry Haemon (1637-38).

Antigone turns on Creon, and in the ensuing stichomythic exchange, Creon is outclassed. He shows his weakness, firstly, by trying to excuse himself, claiming that Eteocles and not he is responsible for the orders he has just announced (1646). Secondly, when he and Antigone argue about the burial of Polyneices, he has no answer to give in reply to her insistence that she will be honoured to lie beside her brother in the grave. He has to resort to calling on the guards to take Antigone away (1659-60). Thirdly, after his unyielding demand that Antigone, despite her protests, will marry Haemon, he suddenly gives way before her threat to kill his son and tells her to leave the country (1682). Creon then makes his exit and Antigone is left victorious.[18]

After Creon's departure from the stage, there occurs between Oedipus and Antigone a final tender scene (which is somewhat drawn-out and repetitive) over their dead, before father and daughter set out into exile together.

The author of a ὑπόθεσις to the Phoenissae remarked of

the play:

> Τὸ δρᾶμα ἔστι μὲν ταῖς σκηνικαῖς ὄψεσι καλόν, ἐπεὶ καὶ παρακληρωματικόν. ἥ τε ἀπὸ τῶν τειχέων Ἀντιγόνη θεωροῦσα μέρος οὐκ ἔστι δράματος, ... ὅ τε ἐπὶ πᾶσι μετ' ᾠδῆς ἀδολέσχου φυγαδευόμενος Οἰδίπους προσέρραπται διὰ κενῆς.

All the scenes in which Antigone appears are, to a greater or lesser degree, suspected of being spurious (as are various other parts of the play).

Verrall, who wished to remove Antigone (and probably Oedipus also) entirely from the Phoenissae, said of the τειχοσκοπία that it appears to have been inserted between sections of the play that were once juxtaposed. He claimed that since the prologue ends with Jocasta's statement that Polyneices has agreed to be present at a conference with Eteocles (81 ff.), it would be logical and in accordance with convention for the conference to begin the action.[19] Verrall implies that the scene which follows the prologue usually begins the action of the drama. This, as has been pointed out, is untrue: in all of Euripides' extant plays, with the exception of two (the Bacchae and the Supplices), there is a second scene, similar to the one in the Phoenissae, before the parodos, and this scene "only rarely, and then incidentally, can. . . be said to begin the action."[20] Moreover, the plot structure of the Phoenissae is loosely episodic throughout, and there is no reason to expect a single line of action, proceeding uninterruptedly.

Is the τειχοσκοπία really, as Verrall puts it, "an irrelevant excrescence"?[21] When Polyneices appears, he does so in a nervous and wary manner (see p. 43), and were it not for

lines 88-201, one might not realize that he is the leader of a powerful force. The τειχοσκοπία , however, makes it clear that Polyneices, despite the fact that he appears gentler and less aggressive than Eteocles, is the general of a large army. This reveals that Thebes is in great danger, which increases the dramatic tension in the ἀγών between the brothers.

There are various linguistic peculiarities in the scene: ἅπαξ λεγόμενα, awkward or harsh constructions, and repetitions. In its favour, however, is the comparative certainty of the text, and the fact that it shows no trace of adaptation from other plays.[22] Taken on its own and in its immediate context, there seems, thus, little reason to reject the τειχοσκοπία as spurious.

Lines 1264-82 (the scene between Antigone and her mother) are not as obviously suspect as the messenger's speech[23] which precedes them. It has, however, been objected that : a) for Jocasta to wait for Antigone at such an urgent time is odd;[24] b) the following choral ode does not refer to the exchange, nor does the Chorus speak of it when Creon enquires where Jocasta has gone (1322 ff.);[25] c) Jocasta has two daughters, but she summons Antigone only, which "is not natural".[26]

In reply to a), it may be observed that Jocasta and Antigone waste no time: Jocasta summons her daughter, apprises her of the situation, dismisses Antigone's modest scruples, and the two women hasten to the scene of battle.[27] With regard to b), there is no reason to expect the choral ode to make mention of the encounter between mother and daughter: lyric passages need not refer precisely to events which occur in the narrative. Although in the

conversation with Creon the Chorus does not tell him directly of the departure of Jocasta and Antigone to the battlefield, it does refer to it in line 1325.[28] Against c), it should be pointed out that Antigone is the older daughter and that her attachment to Polyneices has been established by Sophocles' Antigone. Moreover, as Grube has observed with some asperity: "Jocasta is not gathering her family about her for a picnic on the battlefield."[29]

Verrall's desire to eliminate Antigone entirely from the play compelled him to object to the presence of line 1323 in the text, the language (admittedly awkward) of line 1430 and the abruptness of line 1465. He also adds casually: "A glance through the narrative will show that by a few modifications it might be relieved of her [Antigone's] presence. . . ."[30] This, it seems, was Verrall's way of dealing with the mention of Antigone in lines 1435-37, 1442, 1445, 1447 and 1475, where she cannot so easily be got rid of.

So far, then, the passages which involve Antigone can (with the exception of individual lines) be defended, and it would appear that critics who have wished to expunge them, have done so partly under the influence of the final scene, which, it is generally agreed, has been tampered with by an interpolator. There is, however, no consensus as to where the interpolation begins, or how much of the end of the play is spurious, for there is much in the text that cannot be faulted.

Since ancient times,[31] the main objection to the ending of the play, thematically speaking, has been that Antigone cannot

both bury Polyneices and follow Oedipus into exile.[32] Of course, at least in theory, the burial need not take long and would not necessarily interfere with Antigone's plans to share her father's banishment. However, in lines 1710 ff., the indication is that Antigone and Oedipus are setting out into exile immediately, so there is no question of Antigone's delaying even briefly to bury Polyneices.[33]

The only critic who defends the existing text in its entirety (or almost so), explains that Antigone is able both to bury her brother and to accompany her father into exile, because, by the time she leaves Thebes, the body of Polyneices has already been removed from the city and he can bury it outside the boundaries of Thebes. He bases his explanation on the fact that Creon has ordered the body of Polyneices to be thrown out of Thebes (1627-30) and on line 1744: ὃς ἐκ δόμων νέκυς ἄθαπτος οἴχεται.[34] This theory seems somewhat forced, as it depends entirely on the word οἴχεται being interpreted literally, which it need not, and probably should not, be.[35] Moreover, the idea of an extra-territorial burial is contrary to the specific request of Polyneices:

> θάψον δέ μ', ὦ τεκοῦσα, καὶ σύ, σύγγονε,
> ἐν γῇ πατρώᾳ . . . . (1447-48)

The theme of the exile of Oedipus has sometimes been explained by assuming contamination with the Oedipus Coloneus, and, correspondingly, that of the burial of Polyneices has been accounted for by claiming contamination with Sophocles' Antigone. There are, however, good reasons for each of the themes to occur (separately) at the end of the Phoenissae, without having to resort to the idea of contaminatio on a large scale. With regard to the

exile, several critics have pointed out that Euripides would not have kept Oedipus alive in Thebes during the war between Eteocles and Polyneices, if he had not wished this for some dramatic purpose.[36] The burial issue, on the other hand, is prepared for, firstly, by Antigone's affection for Polyneices as shown in the τειχοσκοπία, secondly, by Eteocles' instruction to Creon to the effect that if Polyneices should die in battle, he is not to be buried by anyone, and that if anyone (κἂν φίλων τις ἦι) should bury him, he or she is to die for the deed (774-77) and thirdly, by Polyneices' request for burial in his native land (1447-48).

Perhaps one should see the exile motif as the main element in the ending of the drama, with the burial issue being introduced as "one more traditional, and theatrical, element".[37] According to those who thus reconcile the two themes in the final scene, Antigone does not persist to the end of the play in her determination to bury Polyneices[38]: in the face of Creon's outright rejection of her original plea (1656), despite her bravado (1657), she modifies her position, asking that she be allowed to wash the body of her dead brother (1667), to bind his wounds (1669), or at least to give him a final embrace (1671). At this point, Creon re-introduces the subject of Antigone's marriage to Haemon (in this play there is no suggestion of love on the part of either Haemon or Antigone; the significance of the marriage is purely dynastic), and the question of the burial of Polyneices does not arise again. Perhaps Antigone entirely gives up her desire to bury her brother, having tried her best to carry out his last wish.

This theory, however, although it reconciles the two motifs

in the final scene, also has its difficulties. It implies that Antigone abandons a family duty, the execution of which would result in her death, for one that is, if not more pleasant, at least less dangerous. Moreover, in the last few lines of the play, Antigone reiterates her intention to bury Polyneices (1743-46); however, even some comparatively conservative critics reject the passage from line 1737 to the end of the play as spurious.[39]

The difference in character between the Antigone of the τειχοσκοπία and the Antigone of the final scene (the encounter with Jocasta is too brief to allow any significant characterization to occur[40]) is very marked. In the earlier scene, she appears to be an ordinary, eager, young girl; in the final scene she is, as in Sophocles' Antigone, a fiercely loyal defender of her family, and the difference in her is revealed as soon as she appears and sings of her lack of maidenly restraint and modesty (1485-92). Can it be said that Antigone, like Neoptolemus in Sophocles Philoctetes, "grows up"? We do not really see enough of Antigone to discern such a development in her; whereas Neoptolemus is on stage for most of the Philoctetes, Antigone, in the Phoenissae, appears only three times (and on one of these occasions, very briefly). It would seem, rather, that the apparent change in Antigone should be explained by the fact that she is presented in two very different situations. Euripides attempts to portray her both as the loving and dutiful daughter of Oedipus (as in the Oedipus Coloneus), and as the devoted sister of Polyneices (as in Sophocles' Antigone), but since we see very little of her in the play, the result is a certain weakness of characterization.

Oedipus Coloneus

In the Antigone, the two daughters of Oedipus have contrasting attitudes toward the burial of Polyneices and they are characterized very differently (see pp. 89 ff.). In the Coloneus, however, Sophocles is less concerned with them as individual personalities; they are important chiefly as Oedipus'devoted daughters, whom he loves, in contrast to his neglectful sons, for whom he feels only hatred.

In the scene with Ismene (324 ff.), Oedipus launches a virulent attack on his sons for their neglect of him. He compares them with Egyptian husbands, who stay at home weaving, while their wives go out to work (337-41). This comparison emphasises the unnaturalness of the situation, in which the rôles of the sexes are reversed- the men behaving like girls, and the girls having to do the work of men. In contrast to what Oedipus believes to be the effete idleness of his sons, he extols the loving care given to him by his daughters- Antigone being his constant companion, guide and helper (345-52), and Ismene acting as messenger. Again in lines 441-49, Oedipus contrasts the care lavished upon him by his daughters with the lack of attention shown him by Eteocles and Polyneices.

The word τροφή and its congnates occur with noticeable frequency in the scene with Ismene (330, 338, 341, 346, 352, 362, 446), and its use emphasises the devoted care of Antigone and Ismene for Oedipus, the neglect of Polyneices and Eteocles, and the concern of Oedipus with the means of subsistence.[41] When Oedipus describes the dedication of the sisters to his maintenance

and well-being, he tells of how Antigone, ἐξ ὅτου νέας/ τροφῆς ἔλαξε (345-46), devoted herself to the τροφή of her father (351). Just as the rôles of brothers and sisters are exchanged, so are those of parent and child: Oedipus, who cared for Antigone when she was a child, is now cared for by her. This reversal of rôles, however, is mentioned with great affection by Oedipus, in contrast to his harsh criticism of his sons. He complained that they behaved like παρθένοι(343) in their βίου τροφάς (338); these words are picked up in lines 445-46, when Oedipus, contrasting his sons' selfish ambition with his daughters' selfless devotion, says:

ἐκ τοῖνδε δ', οὐσαιν παρθένοιν, ὅσον φύσις
δίδωσιν αὐταῖν, καὶ τροφὰς ἔχω βίου....

Although Antigone and Ismene are important in the Coloneus because of their relationship with Oedipus, rather than as characters in their own right, they are individualized to some extent. In accordance with her presentation as the stronger of the sisters in the Antigone, it is Antigone who performs the more arduous duties with regard to tending Oedipus: it is she who shares the hardships of her father's mendicant life, while Ismene's rôle as messenger enables her to live for the most part in comfort at home. It is Antigone also who, perhaps as an extension of her rôle as guide, seems to have to some extent acquired the rôle of adviser to her father: in line 171, she tells him that they must act according to the customs of the land by leaving the sacred precinct of the Eumenides; in line 217, she urges Oedipus to tell the Chorus who he is; in lines 1181 ff., she persuades him to see Polyneices, much against his will.

Nevertheless, Ismene is not presented as timid and reluctant to get involved, as she is in the Antigone. When she arrives on the scene, horrified by her father's unkempt appearance, she exclaims: ὦ δυσάθλιοι τροφαί (330). Oedipus takes her up with the question: ἦ τῆσδε κἀμοῦ; (331). He seems to be implying by this that Ismene is standing outside the suffering shared by himself and Antigone. Ismene, however, is quick to reply: δυσμόρου τ' ἐμοῦ τρίτης (331), making it quite clear that she participates in their wretchedness,[42] and the fact that she is in physical contact with each (329) would lend visual emphasis to her words. Moreover, Ismene even takes the initiative when she volunteers to perform the expiatory rite to the Eumenides (503-4) and instructs Antigone to stay behind to look after Oedipus (507-8).

Oedipus recognizes, and is grateful for, the sense of duty felt toward him by Antigone and Ismene, but there is more to the bond between father and daughters than duty: Oedipus cherishes for Antigone and Ismene a deep affection, which they clearly return. The love of Oedipus for his daughters is revealed in his delight at Ismene's arrival (327 ff.), his tender gratitude for their care of him (342 ff., 445 ff.), and his joy at their safe return after their abduction by Creon (1099 ff.). In his farewell to Antigone and Ismene, Oedipus declares:

> τὸ γὰρ φιλεῖν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐξ ὅτου πλέον
> ἢ τοῦδε τἀνδρὸς ἔσχεθ'.... (1617-18)

This is not arrogance; the depth of the love between father and daughters is borne out by the lamentations of the latter in the final kommos (1670 ff.), in which they express their utter

wretchedness and helplessness without Oedipus (1683-91, 1697-1703, 1709-11, 1732-36).

Once Ismene leaves the stage at line 509, she does not reappear until line 1099, when Theseus restores her and Antigone to Oedipus after they have been kidnapped by Creon. Although Ismene is onstage from line 1099 to line 1555, whe says nothing. She is offstage during the fourth stasimon and the first part of the exodos, but returns with Antigone for the final kommos and the closing scene with Theseus. Ismene's silence throughout the joyous reunion with Oedipus and the meeting with Polyneices is conspicious, but it is demanded by the exigencies of the "three-actor rule", and the part of Ismene during these lines was probably played by a mute.[43]

Because of Ismene's enforced silence, it is Antigone who replies to Oedipus' exclamations of joy at the safe return of his beloved daughters (1099 ff.). It is Antigone, also, who persuades Oedipus to see Polyneices in a speech of some rhetorical skill (1181-1203), who encourages Polyneices to tell Oedipus why he has come (1280-83), and who, after Oedipus has delivered his curse, urges her brother not to continue with his plan to attack Thebes (1414 ff.). There is, of course, no technical reason for Ismene, and not Antigone, to be silent during these lines, but it is appropriate that it should be Antigone who is involved with Polyneices, since her attachment to him was prominent in the Antigone. The association of Antigone and Polyneices in the Coloneus forges a link between it and the earlier play of Sophocles. The request of Polyneices that his sisters bury him if he should be killed in

battle (1435-36) is another reminder of the events of the Antigone, as is Antigone's request that Theseus send her and Ismene back to Thebes:

> ... ἐάν πως
> δικαιώσωμεν ζόντε φόνου
> τοῖσιν ὁμαίμοις. (1770-72)

FOOTNOTES

[1]Lloyd-Jones (CQ 1959) pp. 80 ff. provides a good bibliography for the arguments up to that date. Thalmann (1978) refers to more recent discussions of the question (see note 1 to Appendix 1, p. 177 and Bibliography, pp. 183-87).

[2]See Platt (CR 1912) p. 141.

[3]Brown (CQ 1976) p. 206 condemns the style of the anapaests as "intolerably bad".

[4]See Lloyd-Jones (CQ 1959) p. 94.

[5]Dawe (CQ 1967) p. 22.

[6]See Lloyd-Jones (CQ 1959) p. 114.

[7]Fraenkel (MH 1964) p. 59 expresses the belief that the anapaests were inserted by the interpolator in preparation for his major addition to the play, line 1005 to the end.

[8]So Murray (1955) pp. 192-94.

[9]Page (1972) p. 79.

[10]For such special pleading, see Lloyd-Jones (CQ 1959) pp. 100-104.

[11]Ibid. p. 108.

[12]See Brown (CQ 1976) p. 207.

[13]See Fraenkel (MH 1964) pp. 61-62.

[14]For others' injunctions to modesty, see E. Andr. 876-78, E. El. 343-44; for a character's own inhibitions, see E. Heracl. 474-77, E. Hec. 974-75; for consternation at a breach of conventional modesty, see E. IA 821-34.

[15]See ἀλαὸν ὄμμα (1531), πάτερ γεραιέ (1532), μακρόπνουν ζόαν (1535), γεραιὸν πόδα (1537-38).

[16]See S. Ant. 1012; S. OT 444.

[17]Blaiklock (1952) p. 205.

[18]Ibid. p. 207, on the manner of Creon's exit.

[19]Verrall (1895) p. 236.

[20]Grube (1941) p. 356.

[21]Verrall (1895) p. 236.

[22]See Powell (1911) pp. 9-10.

[23]See Mastronarde (Phoenix 1978) p. 105 on the suspect lines 1104-40 in the messenger's speech.

[24]See Murray (1920) p. 266; Verrall (1895) p. 238.

[25]Verrall (1895) p. 238.

[26]Ibid.

[27]See Grube (1941) p. 365, note 2: "There is no adequate reason to suspect interpolation here. The action is swift, with great economy of language, and neither woman wastes an instant on lamentation."

[28]And, as Powell (1911) p. 15 observes: ". . . in a dialogue an answer is often given implicitly rather than explicitly."

[29]Grube (1941) p. 365, note 2.

[30]Verrall (1895) p. 239.

[31]See Schol. ad Phoen. 1692, who naturally holds Euripides responsible for the inconsistency found here.

[32]See Conacher (Phoenix 1967) p. 92 ff., for a discussion of recent views of the problem.

[33]Kitto (CR 1939) p. 109, says of the passage from line 1710 to 1722 that "it seems better to condemn it," although he admits that "the stylistic critics have nothing to say against the passage" and he himself can find little to criticize in it. It may be noted that Kitto is forced to regard the lines as spurious, if he is to preserve intact his hypothesis that Antigone does not accompany Oedipus into exile, but remains in Thebes to bury Polyneices, intending to join her father later.

[34]See Meredith (CR 1937) pp. 97-98.

[35]Mastronarde (1979) pp. 106-7 says that in terms both of etiquette and of movement on stage, the attendants would probably not advance to carry off the bodies until Antigone, in obedience to Creon's command, had moved away from them. This she does not do before Creon's exit; only at line 1710 ff. do she and Oedipus walk away from the bodies, and even then we cannot know whether the attendants move the corpses immediately, or whether they wait until the end of the play. According to Mastronarde, "the lack of an immediate action in response to Kreon's χρεὼν . . . κομίζειν is neither unique nor unnatural". He cites Andr. 433 and Tro. 419 as examples of similar delays of action.

[36]See Grube (1941) pp. 369-70; Meredith (CR 1937) p. 99; Conacher (Phoenix 1967) p. 94; Kitto (CR 1939) p. 106.

[37]Conacher (Phoenix 1967) p. 99.

[38]See ibid. pp. 99-100; Rawson (GRBS 1970) p. 122.

[39]See Conacher (Phoenix 1967) p. 101.

[40]If the protaganist takes the parts of both Jocasta and Antigone (and also Menoeceus), the part of Antigone here would have to be played by another actor, which may account for its slightness.

[41]See Easterling (1967) pp. 3-4.

[42]See Jebb (1885) on 330 f.

[43]The division of parts among the actors in the Oedipus Coloneus is problematical, since either one must assume that Sophocles introduced a fourth actor for this play, posthumously produced (just as Aeschylus used a third actor in his last plays),

or it would appear that the part of Theseus has to be divided between two, or more, actors. The notion of a fourth actor is unconvincing for several good reasons (see Ceadel [CQ 1941] pp. 141-44). Thus the various parts have to be distributed among three actors, which is no easy matter. See Ceadel (pp. 139 ff.) for various solutions that have been proposed; his own suggestion for the assignment of parts is to be found on p. 146. It is criticized by Taplin (1977) p. 185, note 2.

VI. ANTIGONE IN SOPHOCLES' ANTIGONE AND IN EURIPIDES' ANTIGONE

Sophocles' Antigone

Antigone's devotion to the claims of φιλία is absolute, and in her unwavering determination, she shows herself to be a true daughter of the Oedipus of the Tyrannus. With regard to temperament, Antigone resembles her father as he is portrayed both in the Tyrannus and in the Coloneus: the Chorus refers to her θρᾴσος (852) and her ὀργή (875), and comments on her act of burying Polyneices:

δηλοῖ τὸ γένναμ' ὠμὸν ἐξ ὠμοῦ πατρὸς
τῆς παιδός· εἰκὲν δ' οὐκ ἐπίσταται κακοῖς.
(471-72)

Antigone makes mention of τῶν ἀπ' Οἰδίπου κακῶν (2), Ismene reminds her of the ruin that has befallen every member of their immediate family apart from themselves (49-57), and much of the second stasimon (582 ff.) is, like the second stasimon of the Septem (A. Th. 720 ff.), concerned with the inescapable miseries of ancestral ἄτη . Antigone's action and its consequences are thus set in the context of the curse on the House of Labdacus, but the working of the curse is not prominent in the drama. The characters are made responsible for their own fates and they do not claim otherwise.

Antigone and Ismene: The first words of Antigone (and the opening line of the play)- Ὦ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμήνης κάρα- emphasise very strongly the kinship between the two sisters.[1] The close relationship of Antigone and Ismene is stressed through most of the prologue by their frequent use of the dual form when referring to themselves; the sisters use this form of themselves

seven times in the first sixty-three lines. However, once Ismene has refused to help Antigone to bury Polyneices, the dual is not used by either of them in this way again.[2] The stress on the close relationship between the sisters makes more marked Antigone's isolation once the only surviving member of her family deserts her.

In Antigone's first speech, her distress is very plain; the agonized opening question, the piling up of negatives in lines 4-6, the brooding on the ἄτη of her family, the three urgent queries that conclude her utterance, the jagged rhythm of her speech, all indicate a mind in turmoil. By contrast, Ismene answers her sister in calm, measured sentences (11-17). This sets the pattern for their conversation throughout the prologue- Antigone darkly passionate and forceful; Ismene mild and controlled.

After ascertaining that Ismene knows nothing of Creon's edict, Antigone tells her of its contents, ending with the lines:

οὕτως ἔχει σοι ταῦτα, καὶ δείξεις τάχα
εἴτ' εὐγενὴς πέφυκας εἴτ' ἐσθλῶν κακή. (37-38)

Antigone is very conscious that she is εὐγενής ; she cherishes her εὐγένεια and will not betray it. For her, to bury Polyneices is an action demanded by the noble standards of conduct to which she adheres. If whe were to shrink from performing the burial, she would be betraying her family, her birth and herself. Antigone has no carefully considered reasons for her desire to bury her brother; she only knows that it is necessary to do so.

Ismene's reply (39-40) is typical of her; she is composed

and shows none of Antigone's deep emotion. She calls Antigone ὦ ταλαῖφρον, a sympathetic expression, but one which suggests that Ismene has distanced herself from the situation. If she had used the dual form it would have been different.

When Ismene finds out that Antigone wants her help in burying Polyneices, her response is shocked and incredulous: ἦ γὰρ νοεῖς θάπτειν σφ', ἀπόρρητον πόλει; (44). She is not of the stuff of which heroines are made and the thought of defying Creon's edict horrifies her.

Antigone insists that she will bury Polyneices on her own and in response to Ismene's shocked exclamation: ὦ σχετλία, Κρέοντος ἀντειρηκότος; (47), she replies: ἀλλ' οὐδὲν αὐτῷ τῶν ἐμῶν μ' εἴργειν μέτα (48). The law of the state is completely disregarded; Antigone's loyalty to her brother is all that is important to her. There is no question of her claiming adherence to a divine law above a temporal one, as she does in her confrontation with Creon (450 ff.); at this point, her reaction to the edict is instinctive- she wants to cover Polyneices' body as as to prevent its being torn to pieces by wild animals.[3]

Ismene appeals to her reason (a futile menas of persuasion, for Antigone is not functioning on a rational level). φρόνησον, ὦ καοιγνήτη (49), she begins, and proceeds to remind Antigone of the ghastly fates of the rest of their family. A second time she tells Antigone to think:

... σκόπει
ὅσῳ κάκιστ' ὀλούμεθ', εἰ νόμου βίᾳ
ψῆφον τυράννων ἢ κράτη παρέξιμεν. (58-60)

And yet again she urges Antigone: ἀλλ' ἐννοεῖν χρή. . . . (61).
She concludes with the statement:

τοῖς ἐν τέλει βεβῶσι πείσομαι· τὸ γὰρ
περισσὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἔχει νοῦν οὐδένα. (67-68)

Ismene seems to recognize both that Creon's edict is wrong and that some observance to her dead brother is required of her,[4] but she has neither the courage, nor, perhaps, the will, to flout the law of the land.

Ismene's speech (and probably her final words in particular) stings Antigone into anger. She becomes hostile and rejects any offer of help that Ismene may make in the future (69-77). There is contempt in her dismissal of her sister[5] and proud determination in her declaration:

. . . κεῖνον δ' ἐγὼ
θάψω· καλόν μοι τοῦτο ποιούσῃ θανεῖν. (71-72)

Antigone's fierce egotism is revealed in the stressed ἐμοῦ γε (70), in the emphatically placed ἐγὼ (71), in μοι (72) and in the frequent use of the first person throughout these lines. We may observe that Antigone is beginning to seek to explain, however irrationally, her instinctive desire to bury Polyneices: she says it will be well to rest with her dead brother ἐπεὶ πλείων χρόνος/ ὃν δεῖ μ' ἀρέσκειν τοῖς κάτω τῶν ἐνθάδε (74-75). statement is disconcertingly pragmatic,but it is in keeping with Antigone's very narrow, self-centred perspective; she is thinking only of herself, her proposed action and its significance and consequences for her. When she turns to her sister, however, she becomes much loftier and rather self-righteous:

. . . σοὶ δ' εἰ δοκεῖ,
τὰ τῶν θεῶν ἔντιμ' ἄτιμάσασ' ἔχε. (76-77)

This is Antigone's first direct appeal to divine sanction, which will form the basis of her defence before Creon.[6]

Ismene denies that she is dishonouring the gods, but does not back up her denial with argument. If Antigone hoped to shame and frighten Ismene into joining her (despite her earlier rejection of Ismene), she fails, for Ismene concludes her sentence by declaring that whe has not the strength to flout the authority of the state (78-79). Antigone accepts her decision and announces her intention of going to heap earth on Polyneices (80-81). The gulf which she sees between herself and Ismene is stressed by the strongly contrasting σὺ μὲν and ἐγὼ δὲ .

Ismene replies: οἴμοι τλαίνης, ὡς ὑπερδέδοικά σου (82). She realizes that there is nothing more that she can say to dissuade her sister and that she can only fear for her. It is a tribute to Ismene's gentle patience that despite Antigone's harsh rejection of her, she still speaks tenderly to her.

But Antigone wants no sympathy. Brusquely she brushes Ismene aside: μὴ 'μοῦ προτάρβει· τὸν σὸν ἐξόρθου πότμον. (83) Her last words are almost menacing. But Ismene, in her affectionate concern for Antigone, persists, and tries to persuade her sister at least to keep quiet about her plan, assuring her that she will do the same (84-85). This acts as the proverbial red rag to a bull. Antigone's passion has been inflamed by Ismene's refusal to help her and by her gentle admonitions. She is riding on the crest of her anger and recklessness at this point; to urge caution, so typical of Ismene, is almost to insult her, and she rashly and rather childishly cries:

ὄμμοι κατῳδά· πολλὸν ἐχθίων ἔσει
σιγῶσ', ἐὰν μὴ πᾶσι κηρύξῃς τάδε. (86-87)

Ismene still does not yield. She warns Antigone that chill death will be the probable consequence of her rashness (88), and that she is attempting the impossible (90). Antigone replies: οὐκοῦν, ὅταν δὴ μὴ σθένω, πεπαύσομαι (91), to which Ismene, persevering in her attempts to check her sister, urges: ἀρχὴν δὲ θηρᾶν οὐ πρέπει τἀμήχανα (92). She fails to dissuade Antigone, who threatens her with the hatred, not only of herself, but also of the dead. Antigone concludes:

ἀλλ' ἔα με καὶ τὴν ἐξ ἐμοῦ δυσβουλίαν
παθεῖν τὸ δεινὸν τοῦτο· πείσομαι γὰρ οὐ
τοσοῦτον οὐδὲν ὥστε μὴ οὐ καλῶς θανεῖν. (94-96)

She accepts that she may go to her death without having been able to accomplish her mission; at least, she does not deny it. It does not seem to matter much to her, however, that her enterprise may be futile; it is her gesture that is important and that will gain her the regard of the dead, which is all she cares for. Ismene sees things completely differently; she can see only the public disgrace that would result from Antigone's pointless act and for her there could be no glory in an ineffectual gesture whose end would be inevitable death.[7] There is a hint of reckless defiance, a devil-may-care attitude about Antigone at this point, although this could not be her only motivation or she would certainly not have stood up to Creon's interrogation, if she had brought herself to do the deed at all.

Ismene finally capitulates, but her parting words are, as ever, gentle and loving. She does not understand Antigone any

better, but her great affection for her is undiminished.

What impression would the audience have of Antigone and Ismene at the end of the prologue? Either they could see Antigone as reckless, stubborn, hard and intolerant and Ismene as gentle, affectionate and sensible, or they could regard Antigone as brave, strong and idealistic and Ismene as cowardly and weak. Ismene is σώφρων, Antigone is not[8] - she does not recognize or accept the restrictions placed upon her by the realities of womanhood; she pushes her ἀρετή to its limits. Σωφροσύνη was generally regarded by the Greeks as a "good" quality (especially in a woman), but Sophocles forces his audience to question its validity, to consider whether there are circumstances which rightly demand that one overstep the bounds of moderation.

Are we justified in talking about "the restrictions imposed by . . . womanhood"? The question of the social position of women in classical Athens is a thorny one, and cannot be examined in depth here. It may be observed, however, that writers on the subject generally fall into one of two categories: 1) those who believe that Athenian women of the 5th century B.C. led secluded lives of submission to their menfolk;[9] 2) those who hold that the women of that era enjoyed considerable freedom and respect.[10]

Gomme, the pioneer of the second position, bases his claims largely on these women of tragedy who are independent, strong-minded people (e.g., Clytemnestra, Antigone, Medea). He more or less ignores the evidence of orators and prose writers, whose testimony points to the low status of women.[11] Those who maintain the first position, on the other hand, rely heavily on the evidence

which Gomme passes over.

The vital question seems to be this: can one regard the women of tragedy as providing reliable evidence of the social position of women in classical Athens? The answer to this should probably be negative, since the plane on which tragedy operates is not a contemporary or a realistic one: the legends from which tragedy draws its material belong to a vague, distant, heroic past. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the dramatist was bound by the form of the myth, at least to the extent of having to retain the basic outline of the legend; hence, Clytemnestra, for example, could not be portrayed by Aeschylus as an Ismene or a Chrysothemis.[12]

If one accepts that the women of tragedy belong in a category of their own, and if one gives due weight to the evidence provided by orators and prose writers, it would seem that most citizen women at least,[13] did lead sheltered lives and were relegated to a social position inferior to that of men.

If, in light of this, one considers the possible response of Athenian citizens to the portrayal of Antigone and Ismene in the prologue of the Antigone, it would seem that they might consider Ismene's behaviour more fitting, at least in terms of their own mores. Perhaps, as in the early portrayal of Creon (see p. 102), Sophocles is being deliberately ambivalent, keeping the audience in a state of doubt as to which sister should earn their praise and which their censure, until it is gradually revealed that not only is the σωφροσύνη of Ismene inadequate in the situation in which the sisters find themselves,[14] but that it is precisely because Antigone is not σώφρων in the way Ismene is, that she is

both tragic and heroic. To say, therefore, that Ismene is no more than a foil for Antigone is to oversimplify Sophocles' purpose in his portrayal of the sisters.

The sisters appear again in the second epeisodion. Antigone has been brought before Creon, having been caught in the act of covering Polyneices' body with dust, and Creon has ordered Ismene also to be summoned, suspecting her of complicity in the deed. In response to Creon's accusation against Ismene, there is a tense interchange of stichomythia between the sisters, in which Ismene offers to share Antigone's guilt and her punishment, and Antigone rejects her offer.

These lines have provoked much scholarly debate. An extreme theory, propounded by Rouse,[15] holds that Ismene says that she is guilty because she is in fact guilty, since she performed the first burial of Polyneices. He believes that she did this "in a sort of frenzy of devotion". He describes Ismene as one of those people who are "not at all clever, but affectionate as a dog, and ready in spite of shrinking to face all terrors if love drives them to it." Fortunately, this idea has been rejected in the strongest terms;[16] it is an hypothesis quite unwarranted by the text and an excellent example of what Waldock calls "documentary fallacy".

Those critics who wish to see Antigone as a flawless character have to explain away her harshness to Ismene. They attempt to do this by arguing that Antigone is not really being unkind, that she is merely putting on an act for Creon's benefit in order to convince him that Ismene is innocent so that her life may be saved.[17]

Such an interpretation contradicts all we have seen of Antigone's character in the prologue and the real malice that can be discerned in her in this scene, especially in her taunt of line 549. As it happens, Antigone's repudiation of Ismene does save her sister's life- Creon in line 771 echoes Antigone's words in lines 546-47, which suggests that they made an impression on him- but this does not mean that it was Antigone's intention to do so.

Antigone's harsh treatment of Ismene is perfectly consistent with what we saw of her in the prologue.[18] She said there that she would not accept Ismene's help even if she offered it (69-70), and she sticks to that statement. Ismene's tentative: δέδρακα τοὔργον, εἴπερ ἥδ' ὁμορροθεῖ (536), shows that she has her doubts about the acceptability of her offer to Antigone, and her doubts are proved to be justified by Antigone's immediate rejection of her (538-39).

Ismene responds:

> ἀλλ' ἐν κακοῖς τοῖς σοῖσιν οὐκ αἰσχύνομαι
> ξύμπλουν ἐμαυτὴν τοῦ πάθους ποιουμένη. (540-41)

This shows that she is not in sympathy with the spirit of Antigone's deed, but will stand by her sister in her trouble. Antigone is quick to spot that Ismene has not suffered a change of heart and harshly rejects her offer (543). As far as Antigone is concerned, Ismene has forfeited her right to be called a φίλος ; she has betrayed her by not joining in her enterprise.

Ismene infuriates Antigone by her entreaty:

> μήτοι, κασιγνήτη, μ' ἀτιμάσῃς τὸ μὴ οὐ
> θανεῖν τε σὺν σοὶ τὸν θανόντα θ' ἁγνίσαι.
> (544-45)

To Antigone, Ismene's plea seems like opportunism. She has sacrificed everything for the sake of honouring, and being honoured by, the dead, and she is not prepared to share the glory of her deed with someone who refused to have a part in it.[19] The prominent position of ἐγώ at the end of line 547 lends weight to her insistence that she will die alone and will earn glory by her death. Ismene's plea reveals how little she understands Antigone. It also suggests that she recognizes Antigone's heroism and feels a vague desire to share in it. This, however, is not her main reason for wanting to die with Antigone. She has not suddenly been raised to heroic status; rather, in her weakness, she cannot face life without her stronger sister.[20]

Antigone is implacable, passionate, almost ferocious; her sneer to Ismene in line 549 is deliberately taunting and bitter. It shows her resentment at her sister's betrayal of her and her fury at Ismene's desire to share the glory which by rights is hers alone. In her passion and the single-minded force of her determination, she is "unfeminine", intolerant, harsh and egotistical, but it is in those uncompromising qualities that her strength as well as her weakness lies.

The lines immediately following Antigone's jibe of line 549 are (according to the edition of Jebb):

ΙΣ: τί ταῦτ' ἀνῇς μ', οὐδὲν ὠφελουμένη;

ΑΝ: ἀλγοῦσα μὲν δῆτ', εἰ γελῶ γ', ἐν σοὶ γελῶ. (550-51)

Jebb's translation of these lines is as follows:

Is: Why vex me thus, when it avails thee nought?

An: Indeed, if I mock, 'tis with pain that I mock thee.[21]

According to Jebb's interpretation, Antigone here expresses

concern and tenderness for Ismene, whom she pities and is sorry to hurt. This is significant, for if Jebb is correct, line 551 is (assuming that line 572 is spoken by Ismene; see pp. 119-120) "the only single line in which Antigone is thought certainly to express tenderness for any person other than herself."[22]

However, there are objections to taking Antigone's retort in this way. Firstly, it is not in accord with the context: everything Antigone says to Ismene in this scene is aggressive; she flings each remark of her sister back at her- why then should her tone change here for the duration of a single line? Secondly, the nature of stichomythia, with its brisk to-and-fro movement, is such that each line has to score a point; a stichomythic exchange is finely balanced, pointed altercation. Line 551, as translated by Jebb, does not conform to this pattern: it does not answer the question posed in 550 and it is "flabby and obscure".[23]

How then should one interpret Antigone's reply? The following plausible suggestion has been put forward: ἀλγοῦσα in 551 should not be connected with the οὐδὲν ὠφελουμένη of line 550; Antigone ignores the last part of Ismene's question and replies only to τί ταῦτ' ἀνιᾷς με . Her response, with the μὲν δῆτα being corrective rather than corroborative (as with Jebb),should be translated something like: "No, it is as being hurt myself that I mock you, if I mock you (i.e., if I choose to mock you)." Antigone is referring to the hurt which Ismene has inflicted upon her by letting down the ideal of the family εὐγένεια .[24]

There is no tender compassion in Antigone's attitude to

Ismene. Antigone's love is not tender; it is a burning ideal, and once Ismene has "betrayed" her, Antigone cares nothing for her. Jebb, because of his interpretation of line 551, claims that θάρσει in line 559 "is not said with bitterness".[25] However, having disposed of the romantic interpretation of line 551, it is clear that Antigone's tone in line 559 is heavily sarcastic, as he says to the sister who cannot face life without her: θάρσει· σὺ μὲν ζῇς.[26]

At this point, Antigone drops out of the conversation and Creon picks up the exchange with Ismene, whose main function here is to initiate the subject of the relationship between Antigone and Haemon, in order to prepare the audience for the scene between Haemon and Creon.

Antigone and Creon: The clash between Creon and Antigone concerning the burial of Polyneices is the main issue of the Antigone. To assert, however, as some critics do, that the play is solely or even predominantly about the conflict of ideas[27]- the conflict between the laws of man and the divine laws, between family loyalty and devotion to the state, between φύσις and νόμος - is to oversimplify it. Sophocles is indeed concerned with the clash of concepts, but he is also dealing with character. Creon and Antigone are not merely vehicles for the expression of opposing attitudes and ideas; they are carefully characterized and their personalities direct the course of events. Sophocles manipulates his characters and, through them, the sympathies of the audience, with great skill.

We are introduced to Antigone in the prologue, where she

shows herself to be "loving, egoistic, devout, cruel, idealistic, exhibitionist, and unfeminine".[28] One might add to this catalogue that she is impulsive, reckless and courageous- in short, a force to be reckoned with.

Sophocles' first presentation of Creon may have encouraged the audience in their doubts about Antigone's behaviour (see pp. 95-96), for, when Creon first appears, he makes a good impression. He is perhaps somewhat pompous in his manner, but it must be remembered that he is very new to power (156-57). There is nothing to object to in the general section of his speech, in which he expresses his concern for the well-being of Thebes. He seems to be a dignified ruler, devoted to the city and protective of its citizens. He begins his speech by tracing the descent of the rulership from Oedipus to himself. This has a dual effect: firstly, it associates Creon and Oedipus, a political strategy designed to portray Creon as a second "saviour of the city".[29] Secondly, it emphasises the kinship between Creon and Antigone, which makes their conflict seem all the more bitter. The fact of their kinship prepares us for the similarity of disposition between them- the stubbornness, pride and egotism which they share.[30]

The theme of φιλία , on which Creon here pontificates, is one which runs throughout the play. Who are one's φίλοι ? The word is ambiguous; a φίλος could be either a close relative ("near" and therefore supposedly "dear") or it could signify one who is simply a friend. Creon makes it quite clear who his are; they are the friends of the state (182-83, 187-88). Those who oppose him and Thebes are ἐχθροι . Therefore Polyneices, although he is a φίλος in the sense that he is Creon's nephew,

is not regarded by Creon as such, because he is an ἐχθρος a traitor to the state. This attitude that private friendship and family ties have to be sacrificed to the good of the state (see pp. 53-54) may seem strange and excessive to us, but it may not have seemed so to the Athenians of Sophocles' day, for whom loyalty to the state was a necessity in a society which had transformed a confederacy of allies into an empire by force, and whose imperialist ambitions had already driven her into conflict with two of Sparta's allies, Corinth and Aegina. Loyalty to the πόλις was also one of the characteristics which distinguished the civilized Athenians from barbarian tribes.

Antigone has shown in the prologue that her view of who her φίλοι are, is completely different from Creon's In line 10 she asks Ismene whether she has heard that evils proper for enemies are coming upon their φίλοι .[31] For Antigone, her φίλοι are her nearest and dearest, who can never lose her φιλία (unless, like Ismene, they have forfeited their right to be called φίλος by betraying what Antigone regards as the absolute claims of φιλία itself). They are all-important to her; care for them outweighs the duty of obedience to the state, and when Ismene asks Antigone if she will bury Polyneices despite Creon's edict, she replies: ἀλλ' οὐδὲν αὐτῷ τῶν ἐμῶν μ' ἐμποδὼν μέτα (48; see also 89).

We note from his opening speech that, at this stage at least, Creon is not irreligious. He believes in the gods which the city worships, and he relies on their protection. Polyneices, in attacking Thebes, was attacking Thebes' tutelary deities (199-200);

thus Creon believes that he has the gods on his side when he proclaims the edict forbidding the burial of his nephew. Because he sees Polyneices as the enemy of the gods as well as of the πόλις, he reacts angrily when the Chorus suggests that the gods may have been responsible for his burial (278 ff.).

Antigone's gods are not Creon's. She looks only to the old chthonian deities, the gods of the underworld, who are concerned with the rites of burial and mourning for the dead (777).[32] These gods are independent of the πόλις.[33] Creon and Antigone thus differ completely in their attitudes both to family loyalty[34] and to the gods, and their respective downfalls occur, at least on one level, because of the irreconcilability of these attitudes.

Up to line 190, the audience might reasonably consider Antigone a wilfull, immodest girl and Creon a fair and devoted ruler. Even his declaration that Polyneices' corpse is not to be buried is not as shocking as it may seem to us to be. Polyneices was a traitor, and to the Greeks it was a most heinous crime to betray one's city. There is evidence to show that traitors were not allowed burial within their own country,[35] but there is no extant account of a case in which burial <u>per se</u> was forbidden. It makes sense to consider Creon's edict a politically justifiable one, for then Sophocles is not presenting a clearcut (and somewhat uninteresting) conflict between an indisputably wrong temporal law and a right divine law, but rather a clash between two laws which are <u>in themselves</u> both right, a law of man and a law of the gods[36]- which makes for a more provocative drama.

Even if we accept that Creon's edict was politically

admissible, the way in which it is presented hints at something not right about it. Creon says:

τοῦτον πόλει τῇδ' ἐκκεκήρυκται τάφῳ
μήτε κτερίζειν μήτε κωκῦσαί τινα,
ἐᾶν δ' ἄθαπτον, καὶ πρὸς οἰωνῶν δέρας
καὶ πρὸς κυνῶν ἑδεστὸν αἰκισθέντ' ἰδεῖν. (203-6)

The purely physical repugnance that one feels in reaction to these lines (the gist of which is several times repeated in the play; see 410-12, 697-98, 1016-22, 1040-41, 1080-83, 1198) leads one to shrink from the thought of a human person suffering such a fate.[37]

From this point on, Sophocles, having persuaded his audience that Creon is a stern but righteous ruler, expands the character of the man to reveal his tyrannical disposition,[38] and we come to see that it is not the interests of the state, but his own personal pride, that he is defending. He appears to see no distinction between different kinds of law: he regards his own κήρυγμα as having the same weight as the established, codified laws of the state (in line 447 he refers to his κηρυχθέντα and in line 449 he equates it with the νόμους of Thebes). The Chorus' unenthusiastic response to his edict provides the first hint of Creon's tyranny. They say:

νόμῳ δὲ χρῆσθαι παντί που γ' ἔνεστί σοι
καὶ τῶν θανόντων χὡπόσοι ζῶμεν πέρι. (213-14)

This hardly indicates a constitutional ruler, and is, moreover, proved by Creon's fate to be untrue. The suspicion of bribery and corruption which Creon shows first at lines 221-2 and then on several subsequent occasions (293 ff., 310-14, 322, 1047 ff.), is typical of a tyrant.[39] Lines 289-92 indicate that some of

the citizens are in opposition to Creon's edict (this bears out what Antigone [504- 5, 509] and Haemon [692 ff.] say later about there being support for Antigone in the city). The image of oxen beneath a yoke, used here by Creon to illustrate the nature of the relationship between him and the citizens, indicates his autocratic attitude toward them, and this is emphasised by the prominent position of ἐμοί (290) and ἐμέ (292). Creon's despotic view of his people is revealed also in lines 478-79, where he compares Antigone to a slave, an extreme attitude to adopt toward a royal kinswoman.

In the scene of confrontation between Antigone and Creon (441 ff.), Antigone is presented far more favourably than she was in the prologue. She is dignified and composed, and she claims as sanction for her action the ἄγραπτα νόμιμα of the gods (450-55) (a force every Athenian would respect), against which she places Creon's φρόνημα , his pride (458-60). For the first time, Creon (not Creon and the state) and the gods are directly opposed. Creon's response to Antigone's speech is mean-spirited, cruel and autocratic by contrast. He no longer claims the well-being of the state to be his prime concern; his motivation is arrogant pride. He feels threatened by Antigone, and says:

ἦ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἀνήρ, αὕτη δ' ἀνήρ,
εἰ ταῦτ' ἀνατὶ τῇδε κείσεται κράτη. (484-85)

This fear of being triumphed over by a woman is a recurrent one with Creon (see also 525, 678-80, 740, 746, 756), and it suggests that for him the conflict with Antigone has become a personal battle, unrelated to the claims of the πόλις and its gods.

In the stichomythic exchange of lines 508-25, the contrasting views of Creon and Antigone concerning the nature of a φίλος , are thrown into relief. In Creon's terms, Eteocles is a φίλος and Polyneices is not. He cannot understand that, according to Antigone's conception of a φίλος , both brothers have the same claim on her loyalty, irrespective of how they stand in relation to Thebes. It strikes one that, despite their kinship and similarity of temperament, there is no common ideological ground between Antigone and Creon. Both are narrow and intense in their perspective, but they operate on totally different levels.

Creon's arrest of Ismene for complicity in the burial of Polyneices (489-90) indicates both his tyrannical use of power and his typical tyrant's fear of τῶν μηδὲν ὀρθῶς ἐν σκότῳ τεχνωμένων (494).

Antigone does not flinch in the face of death. She can even ask Creon almost impudently whether he would like to do more than kill her (497). He replies: ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδέν· τοῦτ' ἔχων ἅπαντ' ἔχω (498). This suggests that putting Antigone to death will give him a sense of personal victory, unconnected with his position as protector of the city's interests. Antigone echoes the earlier comment of the Chorus (213-14) when she says:

ἀλλ' ἡ τυραννὶς πολλά τ' ἄλλ' εὐδαιμονεῖ,
κἄξεστιν αὐτῇ δρᾶν λέγειν θ' ἃ βούλεται. (506-7)

As we noted earlier, this statement is shown by the outcome of the play to be untrue- the gods have to be reckoned with and Creon pays the price of ignoring them.

In the scene with Haemon (631-780), Creon's attitude toward his φίλοι is further elaborated. He tells Haemon that it is his duty to obey his father in all things, and he declaims briefly on the benefit of having dutiful children and the disadvantage of having ἀνωφέλητα τέκνα (640-47).[40] For Creon, his family is, like the state, an institution which he controls, and which has the duty of submitting to his will- an obedient relative is a φίλος , a disobedient one is an ἔχθρος . He relates the duties of the head of a household and those of the head of the state, for whom he claims:

ἀλλ' ὃν πόλις στήσειε, τοῦδε χρὴ κλύειν
καὶ σμικρὰ καὶ δίκαια καὶ τἀναντία. (666-67)

Citizens are required to adopt the position of slaves before him, submitting their wills and their judgement entirely to his. In the heated stichomythic exchange between father and son, Creon goes so far as to claim that the city belongs to him alone as its ruler (738). This was the claim of tyrants like Hippias, a claim which the developed Athenian democracy utterly rejected.[41] When Haemon tells Creon directly that he is offending the gods (745), Creon simply ignores him; his egotism is supreme and he refuses to consider the position of the gods (745-46).[42] His ability to reason is poor, as he cannot see beyond his own arrogance. Creon's complete self-absorption and insensitivity is clearly revealed not only in the way in which he treats his son, but also in the casual way in which he grants Ismene a reprieve from death. The Chorus asks him if he means to kill both girls, and, as though it were of little importance, he replies offhandedly: οὐ τήν γε μὴ θιγοῦσαν· εὖ γὰρ οὖν λέγεις (771). He cannot bear to admit that he had accused her unjustly; this graceless

dismissal is all that he can bring himself to utter.

The first sign of weakening in Creon can be detected in his granting Ismene a reprieve from death. Immediately after this, he changes Antigone's punishment from death by stoning (35-36) to death by starvation (773 ff.), which may be a further indication that Creon's resolution is crumbling. There are several possible reasons for his change of plan and perhaps we are intended to see Creon's decision as resulting from a mixture of motives. The reason given by Creon himself is that the city will avoid pollution if Antigone is starved to death (776). He comes back to this at line 889, when he declares:

ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἁγνοὶ τοὐπὶ τήνδε τὴν κόρην.

In lines 777-78 Creon says:

κἀκεῖ τὸν Ἅιδην ὃν μόνον σέβει θεῶν,
αἰτουμένη που τεύξεται τὸ μὴ θανεῖν . . .

This suggests that one of the factors contributing to Creon's change of plan is that he half wants Antigone to be saved, either because his conscience is troubling him, or, more likely, because having heard from Haemon that the citizens are not happy about Antigone's punishment (692 ff.), he fears that her death may cause political unrest in Thebes. Creon's fear of trouble in the city may be behind his change of Antigone's punishment in another way: stoning has to be a public action, which would necessitate the support of the citizens, and possibly Creon, being afraid that the people would refuse to carry out this sentence, changes the punishment of Antigone to one which does not require public co-operation.[43]

In her kommos (806 ff.), Antigone does not express regret for what she has done, but her fighting spirit appears to be subdued at the prospect of leaving life unloved, unmourned and deserted by the gods. She is softer and more vulnerable than we saw her before, and Creon appears very harsh by contrast, when he roughly orders her to be led away and tells her that there is no hope of her escaping death (883-90; 935-36).

Creon is as harsh and tyrannical toward Teiresias as he was toward Haemon. He refuses to listen to the old seer when he advises: ... εἶκε τῷ θανόντι, μηδ' ὀλωλότα / κέντει (1029-30), although his advice is based on signs given by those gods of the city of whom Creon claims to be a supporter. He denies his gods, refusing to bury Polyneices even εἰ θέλουσ' αἰ Ζηνὸς αἰετοὶ βορὰν / φέρειν νιν ἁρπάζοντες ἐς Διὸς θρόνους (1040-41). His ὕβρις is supreme. Only when Teiresias tells Creon of the ghastly fate that lies in store for him, of what he himself has to fear, does he falter and yield to the advice of the Chorus (1095 ff.).[44]

Creon buries Polyneices and goes to release Antigone, but he arrives too late; she has hanged herself, and hard upon her suicide follow the deaths of Creon's son and wife. Antigone's death sets in motion the chain of reaction which destroys Creon's closest relatives.[45] As Teiresias predicted, Creon is punished through those whom he rejected- his real φίλοι, in contrast to those "friends of the city" whom he claimed as φίλοι.

Much has been made of the fact that, despite that Chorus' instruction to Creon to release Antigone and then to bury

Polyneices (1100-1101), he performs these actions in the reverse order. There is a perfectly sound dramatic reason for this: for Creon to have buried Polyneices after finding Antigone dead and after seeing his son kill himself, would have been anti-climatic to say the least.[46]

It has been noted, however- and it would surely strike an audience, even if the Chorus' direction had been omitted- that if Creon had gone to release Antigone first, her life, and consequently Haemon's, might have been saved (except, of course, that we do not know how soon after her imprisonment she committed suicide). If this had occurred, the tragedy would have melted away before our very eyes. For the play to have any meaning, Antigone must die, although Sophocles clearly shows- firstly, by the development of Creon's character into that of a proud, petty tyrant; secondly, by the development of Antigone's character into that of a heroine; thirdly, by the approval of Antigone's enterprise shown by Ismene, Haemon and the Theban citizens- that Antigone has acted rightly. Nevertheless- and this is her tragedy- in living up to her noble standards, she has contravened human laws. She has set herself outside the jurisdiction of men and she must pay the price, but her death is an indication of her excellence rather than of her guilt.[47]

On the psychological level, it should be remembered that Creon is an insensitive, unimaginative man who does not understand Antigone. Possibly it did not occur to him that it would be kinder to attend to the living Antigone, before burying her dead brother, or that Antigone might not wait for a lingering

death but might kill herself in a manner befitting her noble birth and her impulsive temperament. Perhaps, however, one should not seek to determine Creon's motivation in this matter; there is no indication in the text as to his reason for reversing the order of the Chorus' instructions and maybe Sophocles was at this point concerned only with dramatic necessity. One must remember that the Greek dramatists were not "primarily concerned with the unique aspect of each man's experience", as modern playwrights frequently are.[48]

The attitude of the Chorus of Theban Elders toward the conflict needs to be examined. The usual practice of Sophocles was to make the members of the Chorus of the same age and sex as the main character. In this play, however, with Creon and Antigone occupying equally important rôles, Sophocles has chosen to make the Chorus resemble Creon rather than Antigone, since Antigone's isolation is an essential feature of her tragic situation.

The reaction of the members of the Chorus to the pronouncement of the edict is not openly disapproving, but it is markedly unenthusiastic (211-14). Their proposal that a god may have been responsible for the burial of Polyneices (278-79) suggests that they, unlike Creon, see the offence to the gods inherent in the edict.

Most of the famous "Ode to Man" is related only very tenuously to the concerns of the play, except for the second antistrophe (365-75), which expresses condemnation of anyone- clearly this applies to Antigone- who breaks the laws of his city.

When the members of the Chorus see that it is Antigone who is guilty of flouting the law, their response is divided between pity (379-80) and reproachfulness (381-83). A mixed reaction is apparent again at lines 471-72, where the Chorus seems partly to be excusing Antigone on the grounds that she has inherited her temperament from her father, and partly to be criticizing her for not yielding to Creon's edict. The choral ode of lines 582-630 suggests that the curse on the House of Labdacus is partly to blame for Antigone's rashness, but is also expresses "a meagre-minded conviction that Antigone was mad to do what she did".[49]

When Creon delivers his homily on obedience, the old men of the Chorus diplomatically commend what he has said (681-82), and, when Haemon has had his say, they solve the problem of whom to support by backing up both (724-25). At the end of the Ἔρως ode, when the Chorus heralds the appearance of Antigone, it seems to be in sympathy with her (800-805). The Elders try to comfort her as she bewails her fate (817-22; 834-38); yet they do not abandon their disapproving attitude (853-56). The choral ode of lines 944-87 does not express either approval or disapproval of Antigone or Creon; it deals with the indomitable force of fate in a neutral way.

The only occasion on which the Chorus speaks really positively is when it advises Creon to release Antigone and to bury Polyneices. After this, it comes out clearly in opposition to Creon: it refers to him as ἔμαρτών (1260), opines that he sees too late what is right (1270), and its final pious utterance

is clearly a warning against behaving as Creon has done, since it is he who has not reverenced the gods (1349-50), he who has been punished and he who is old (1351-52).[50]

The Theban Elders form a group of anxious old men, who neither want to endanger themselves by supporting Antigone (although they seem to sympathise with her position), nor can bring themselves to applaud Creon's behaviour. Only when Creon has been "proved" by Teiresias to have been in the wrong, are they prepared to risk taking a firm stand against him.[51]

It has been claimed that Creon and not Antigone is the main character in the drama, despite its title.[52] The part of Creon is certainly played by the protagonist; he is on stage far more than Antigone is- she leaves the stage at line 943 and does not reappear- and he speaks approximately 350 verses as compared with about 200 of Antigone. If, however, "main character" is equated with "most heroic character", it is undoubtedly to Antigone that the title should be given, since Creon suffers only incidentally the consequences of his actions, whereas Antigone chooses to suffer the consequences of hers. Moreover, Creon is revealed to have been in the wrong and is seen at the end of the play as a broken man, whereas Antigone emerges with heaven on her side, triumphant over her opponent. It is, however, the opposition between Creon and Antigone that is the raison d'etre of the drama and both characters are equally important in this respect. Thus, to regard one or the other as the "main character" is misleading and distorts the meaning of the play.

Antigone and Polyneices: Antigone considers herself bound by the

claims of family φιλία to bury Polyneices. This in no way suggests that there is anything "not quite right" about her relationship with her brother, tempting though it may be to infer from lines 904-20 that Antigone, like her father, has been involved in an incestuous liaison.[53] There is also no hint that Polyneices was Antigone's favourite brother; it happens that it is he and not Eteocles who requires her pious attention, and she makes it clear that both brothers have the same claim on her in terms of loyalty and religious observance (511 ff.).

Why does Antigone, having buried Polyneices once, find it necessary to return to the body a second time? This problem has been tackled enthusiastically by scholars, with some startling results. The remarkable suggestion that it was Ismene and not Antigone who performed the first burial, has already been commented on (see p. 97). Somewhat more popular has been the theory that the gods themselves buried Polyneices for the first time.[54] The main arguments put forward by those who support the idea of divine intervention are: a) the prologue takes place at dawn, after which Antigone goes off to bury the body, but it is the πρῶτος ἡμεροσκόπος (253) who discovers that Polyneices has been buried; this means that Polyneices has been buried, before the sisters met, by someone other than Antigone or Ismene;[55] b) the Guard reports that whoever buried the body left no traces behind him (249-52); c) the Chorus suggests that the burial may have been the work of the gods (278-79).

In the opening lines of the parodos (100 f.), the Chorus greets the rising sun, which suggests that the conversation of

the prologue between Antigone and Ismene takes place not at dawn, but in the dark before sunrise, after which Antigone goes to bury her brother's body.

It has been suggested that Antigone was not caught at the first burial because the πρῶτος ἡμεροσκόπος , the first man to watch at all that day, had not yet come on.[56] However, a more recent critic has observed that Sophocles is unlikely to have used the term ἡμεροσκόπος simply as an alternative for φύλαξ ; ἡμεροσκόπος implies a corresponding νυκτοφύλαξ , and it follows that the burial, having been performed by Antigone during the night-watch, was only discovered by the first day-watch.[57] The ἡμῖν in line 253 thus refers to the νυκτοφύλακες , of whom the Guard was one. This explains why the Guard is so frightened: he has failed to protect the body as he was instructed to do. It also accounts for the mysterious lines 249-52: the Guard is excusing himself for having failed in his duty, by stressing that there were no visible signs of the burial having been performed, which he might have been expected to notice. Lines 259-67 would make little sense if the watchmen had, quite legitimately, arrived too late to prevent the burial, because their shift had not yet begun. If, however, the watchmen had failed to detect Antigone performing the burial while they were on duty, it is quite understandable that they wrangled among themselves, each trying to free himself from blame. The third ὑπόθεσις to the Antigone states: καὶ δὴ λαθοῦσα τοὺς φύλακας ἐπιβάλλει χῶμα ; this supports the idea that Antigone contrived to bury Polyneices by deceiving the guards and not by anticipating their watch.[58]

This theory has been used to explain lines 437-39, in which the Guard says:

> τὸ μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐκ κακῶν πεφευγέναι
> ἥδιστον· ἐς κακὸν δὲ τοὺς φίλους ἄγειν
> ἀλγεινόν.

The Laurentian scholiast explained the difficulty inherent in τοὺς φίλους being used by a social inferior of a royal princess as follows: φησί, διὰ τὸ εἶναι τὴν Ἀντιγόνην τοῦ βασιλικοῦ γένους . This obviously does not solve the problem. To the scholiast's explanation, Jebb adds: "he is a δοῦλος of the family".[59] The objection to this is that whether the Guard is a slave or a free-born soldier, he would hardly refer to a member of the royal House as a φίλος . If, however, he is not referring to Antigone, but to those of his fellow νυκτοφύλακες who were supposed to be watching at the time when Antigone performed the burial, his mention of his φίλοι makes perfect sense.[60]

Now that we have eliminated the first two arguments of those who support the theory of burial by supernatural forces, it is clear that the third argument, the comment of the Chorus, cannot on its own be regarded as sufficient indication to the audience of divine intervention. The text will not support such an inference.[61]

Both burials are performed by Antigone herself. She admits it to the Guard (434-35) and as much is implicit in the comparison between her and a mother bird, who having left its nest full, returns to find it bare (423-28): Antigone has returned to find her brother, once buried, now uncovered.[62]

There is no difficulty in finding a convincing dramatic reason for the double burial. By causing Creon to discover that his edict has been disobeyed before he learns that Antigone is the guilty party, Sophocles prolongs the dramatic interest. The audience will guess that Antigone is the culprit and, by the portrayal of Creon's violent reaction to the Guard's news, their anticipation of the inevitable encounter between Antigone and Creon is increased.[63]

It has been suggested that ἦθος is sacrificed to μῦθος in the case of the double burial- that the only reason for Antigone's return to Polyneices' corpse is a dramatic one.[64] Most critics, however, have not been so easily satisfied[65] and theories as to Antigone's motive in returning to her brother's body are many and varied. Some scholars take a psychological approach: Antigone returns to the corpse because Sophocles wishes to show that she cannot bury Polyneices against Creon's will and sacrifices herself for a vain gesture,[66] or that she returns because she is a rebel and wants to be recognized as such.[67]

There is a belief, based on two lines of Horace,[68] that, according to the ancients, a single sprinkling of three handfuls of dust constituted burial. The situation expressed in the ode of Horace is, however, far from being parallel to that of Antigone: Horace's passer-by fulfils the minimum requirement for the burial of a stranger by scattering dust on the corpse, but Antigone is burying her brother, and one would expect her to want, or to be required by religious convention, to bury him more ceremoniously than a stranger. Probably Antigone, having fulfilled

the minimum requirement by sprinkling dust on Polyneices, returns to complete the burial rite with χοαί [69] and, perhaps, with ritual lamentation, κωκυτός.[70]

Maybe, however, it is wrong to dwell upon Antigone's possible reasons for returning to the body of Polyneices, since Sophocles does not mention them. The double burial is so dramatically important that perhaps Sophocles felt that he could ignore the matter of human motivation; perhaps, after all, here ἦθος is sacrificed to μῦθος.

Antigone and Haemon: Antigone (daughter of Oedipus) and Haemon (son of Creon) are representatives of the two branches of the Theban royal House, and their proposed marriage is clearly motivated by dynastic considerations. Through them, the family of Oedipus and the family of Creon will be joined into one strong political unit, and Haemon's succession to the throne will be assured.[71]

Antigone never mentions Haemon and her feelings toward him are not revealed. The much-disputed line 572 (and probably 574 and 576 also) should be given to Ismene, as it is in the MSS (although it must be conceded that MS authority is not binding with regard to the attribution of lines) and scholia, rather than to Antigone, as many scholars, following the Aldine edition of 1502, have done.[72] To allocate 572 to Antigone would interrupt the regular pattern of the stichomythia. Moreover, in order to stress the tragedy of Antigone's situation, her isolation must seem complete, and her devotion to her dead brother absolute; the idea of a strong attachment between

Antigone and Haemon would detract from our conception of her isolation.[73] Had Sophocles wanted Antigone to express love for Haemon, it is strange that he gives her no lines elsewhere which indicate her affection for him. Even when Antigone, lamenting her fate, several times mourns the fact that she will never be married, she does not mention Haemon (806-16, 869, 876, 891).

It has been objected that the superlative φίλτατε is not natural coming from Ismene,[74] but there need be nothing extraordinary in such an endearment 's being used in an atmosphere that is charged with emotion and by one who is, after all, Haemon's cousin,[75] and who was expected to become his sister-in-law.

If line 572 is spoken by Ismene, it is to her that Creon's reply at line 573 is addressed: ἄγαν γε λυπεῖς καὶ σὺ καὶ τὸ σὸν λέχος . It would be absurd, in this case, to translate τὸ σὸν λέχος as "your marriage"; the phrase must mean "the marriage of which you are speaking", which is not perhaps the most natural interpretation, but certainly a possible one.[76]

The much-disputed lines 904-20[77] need to be examined here, for, if we accept them as genuine, they reinforce the impression that Polyneices means more to Antigone than a husband, i.e. Haemon. Antigone says that she would not have done for a husband or a child what she did for Polyneices, because a husband or a child could be replaced, but she will never have another brother since her parents are dead. These lines seem to be based on the story about Intaphernes' wife, related as

an oddity in Herodotus, Book III. However, the great differences between the situation of Intaphernes' wife and that of Antigone make the use of the story here quite absurd: firstly, Intaphernes' wife will save her brother's life by her choice, but Antigone's brother is already dead and not his life but only his burial is at stake; secondly, Antigone has no husband or children, so her choice is purely hypothetical; thirdly, Antigone's rejection of a husband and children suggests that she did not act only according to the ἄγραπτα θεῶν νόμιμα as she claimed earlier (450 ff.). There was not even much sisterly love involved in her action, for if she could have had another brother, she would not have gone to so much trouble over Polyneices. It appears, thus, that irreplaceability was the main criterion on which Antigone operated.

The passage is not only peculiar in content; it also contains great difficulties of language and syntax. Lines 909-10 are especially elliptical and awkward.[78] When one combines the odd content of the lines with their linguistic idiosyncrasies, the passage must be regarded as highly suspect.

But is it merely a bad borrowing by Sophocles from Herodotus, or is it the work of an interpolator? Aristotle in the Rhetoric (the probable date of which is 338 B.C.) reveals that he knows and accepts the passage as Sophoclean, despite its difficulties.[79] This means that, as one critic puts it, "our authority for this passage is better than what we have for most of the rest of the play- a manuscript written fifteen centuries after the performance."[80] This is hardly conclusive

evidence against taking the lines to be the work of an interpolator; all it means is that if the passage is an interpolation, it must be an early one.

In support of the theory that the passage is the work of an interpolator rather than of Sophocles, it may be pointed out that if one removes lines 904-20 from the text, line 921 follows line 903 smoothly, without there being a hint of a lacuna. More importantly, the lines are so inconsistent with Antigone's portrayal elsewhere in the play, so absurdly incongruous, that it is only with great difficulty and special pleading that those who accept the passage as Sophoclean are able to justify it.[81] Probably the lines were inserted by an actor, who was more concerned to exploit the opportunity for rhetoric offered by the dramatic situation, than to be consistent.[82]

Although his relationship with Antigone is not developed in the play, Haemon's rôle is important as a structural and dramatic link between Creon, his father, and Antigone, his fiancée. Haemon takes Antigone's part against his father; Creon becomes angry and abusive at the "disobedience" of his son; by his refusal to listen to reason, Creon drives Haemon to his death; the news of Haemon's death causes Eurydice to kill herself. Haemon, thus, is the instrument whereby Creon's edict is made to recoil upon him to bring about his downfall in the shape of the destruction of his family.

In the scene with Creon (631-765), Haemon tries, like Ismene before him and Teiresias after him, to reason with his father, to persuade him to recognize his error and to release

Antigone. It is interesting to note that this scene is parallel to the one between the sisters in the prologue.[83] There Ismene pleaded with Antigone to be realistic and to see reason; φρόνησον, ὦ κασιγνήτη (49) was the opening of her main speech. Here Haemon is trying to persuade Creon of the same necessity for common sense, and he too begins his principal argument with an appeal to reason: πάτερ, θεοὶ φύουσιν ἀνθρώποις φρένας. (683)

Haemon's manner of approach to his father comes as a surprise. Both the Chorus (626-30) and Creon (632-33) have led us to expect that Haemon, sad or perhaps angry and resentful at his father's treatment of Antigone, will make an emotional appeal to Creon, based on his love for his betrothed. However, Haemon does not attempt to persuade his father by using the argument of love; he pleads only in terms of filial concern and political advantage. This does not suggest that his feeling for Antigone is in doubt; rather, it shows that Haemon has something of a diplomat's shrewdness. He realizes that to plead on the grounds of his love for Antigone would cut no ice with a man like Creon, but that if he takes a line that strikes at Creon's own standing with the gods and with his people, he may succeed in winning him over. This is not to say that Haemon's concern for his father is not genuine; it surely is, but underlying the anxiety for Creon expressed in Haemon's speech is the fact of his love for Antigone.[84]

Haemon is eager to save his father from taking a step that would be both an offence to the gods (745) and a political

error of judgement (692 ff.). He advises Creon of the wisdom of knowing how to yield (710-11) and warns him of the danger of not doing so (712-17). Haemon here uses the same kind of metaphors to Creon as Creon himself earlier used to Antigone (473-78). Uncle and niece share an intractable stubbornness which proves fatal to both, but Antigone's unbending determination in an honourable cause brings her death with glory, while Creon's obstinacy leads not to death, but to the misery of surviving the deaths of his son and his wife.

Creon resents Haemon's advice (726-27 and Haemon's temper, thus far kept well under control, begins to rise. The growing anger on both sides is reflected in the rapid stichomythic exchange. It culminates in Creon's declaration: τοιάυτην τοτ' οὐκ ἔσθ' ὡς ἔτι ζῶσαν χαρεῖς (750), and in Haemon's retort: ἥδ' οὖν θανεῖται καὶ θανοῦσ' ὀλεῖ τινά (751), which Creon interprets as a threat to himself. Haemon's parting words prepare us for his own death:

> ... σύ τ' οὐδαμὰ
> τοὐμὸν προσόψει κρᾶτ' ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ὁρῶν,
> ὡς τοῖς θέλουσι τῶν φίλων μαίνῃ ξυνών. (763-65)

If we are in any doubt as to the depth of Haemon's love after the scene with Creon, the choral ode which follows (781-805) must dispel it. The Chorus sings of the great power of Ἔρως that no mortal can withstand. Ἔρως is held responsible for the quarrel between Creon and Haemon (794); this, if nothing else, indicates the love that Haemon did not express in the previous scene, but which was his motivating force. Line 791 is deliberately ambiguous: σὺ καὶ δικαίων ἀδίκους φρένας

παραστᾶς ἐπὶ λώβᾳ. It most obviously refers to Haemon in view of the fact that the following line mentions the quarrel of kinsmen. However, it could also be applied to Antigone, who is about to appear on stage. Thus, the ode both looks back to the scene between Haemon and Creon and forward to the kommos of Antigone.

Euripides' Antigone

From the fragments of, and references to, the lost Antigone of Euripides, it is clear, firstly, that the play could not have followed the version found in the Phoenissae (in which Antigone is ready to murder Haemon rather than marry him [E. Ph. 1675-82]), and, secondly, that the relationship between Antigone and Haemon was more prominent in Euripides' play than in the Antigone of Sophocles.

We read in the "Aristophanic" ὑπόθεσις to Sophocles' Antigone: κεῖται ἡ μυθοποιία καὶ παρὰ Εὐριπίδῃ ἐν Ἀντιγόνῃ· πλὴν ἐκεῖ φωραθεῖσα μετὰ τοῦ Αἵμονος δίδοται πρὸς γάμου κοινωνίαν καὶ τέκνον τίκτει τὸν Μαίονα. scholiast on Sophocles' Antigone 1350 writes: ὅτι διαφέρει τῆς Εὐριπίδου Ἀντιγόνης αὕτη, ὅτι φωραθεῖσα ἐκείνη διὰ τὸν Αἵμονος ἔρωτα ἐξεδόθη πρὸς γάμον, ἐνταῦθα δὲ τοὐναντίον.

From these reference it would appear that Haemon helped Antigone to bury Polyneices; he married her, and she bore him the child Maion. At what stage the main action of the play took place is not clear.[85] The lines of the ὑπόθεσις suggest that it was constructed according to much the same pattern as the Antigone, but Hyginus (fab. 72) presents us with an alternative

possibility.[86] According to his account, Haemon is ordered by Creon to kill Antigone, his wife, for her part in the burial of Polyneices. Haemon does not kill her; he gives Antigone to shepherds and lies to his father. Years later, their son, born after Antigone's sentence of death and having reached adolescence, goes to Thebes, where Creon recognizes him. Creon will not pardon Haemon for not killing Antigone and for lying to him, so Haemon kills himself and Antigone.

It is thus possible that Euripides departed from the Sophoclean version insofar as he portrayed Antigone and Haemon, not as young lovers, but as a middle-aged, married couple.

FOOTNOTES

[1]It has been suggested by Willis (Studies Presented to D.M Robinson 1953) pp. 553 ff. that αὐτάδελφον may mean not "very sister", but "possessing the same brother". This seems, however, to be a somewhat tortuous interpretation of the adjective.

[2]See Knox (1964) p. 79. The dual form as used of the sisters occurs in the prologue at lines 3, 13, 21, 50, 58, 61, 62.

[3]But cf. Kitto (1956) p. 176: "The religious and the human or instinctive motives are not sharply distinguished by Sophocles; indeed, they are fused- and for a very good reason: he saw no distinction between them; the fundamental laws of humanity and the Dikê of the gods are the same thing."

[4]In lines 65-67, she asks τοὺς ὑπὸ χθονὸς (i.e., either Polyneices alone [plural used for singular], or Polyneices and all her other dead relatives, or the gods of the underworld) to pardon her for obeying Creon's edict.

[5]Jebb (1900) p. xxviii comments: "It is the tenderness, quite as much as the strength, of Antigone's spirit that speaks in her answer. . . ." This is absurd and is typical of the school of critics which seeks to whitewash Antigone and to view her romantically as the paragon of every virtue.

[6]Levy (TAPhA 1963) pp. 139-40 writes: ". . . from the inevitable disclosure of this plan to others there results a new and ever more insistent demand upon her to defend herself by means of doctrine or reason. . . . She therefore evolves several variously satisfactory doctrinal formulations and reasoned accounts of her principles of action."

[7]See Gellie (1972) p. 31.

[8]Méautis (1957) p. 178 writes: "Antigone est amour, rien qu'amour, don absolu, dévouement entier, folie, abnégation. Elle repousse tout ce qui est prudence humaine, calcul, raisonnement."

[9]See, for example, Lacey (1968) chap. 7; Ehrenberg (1943) chap. 8.

[10]See, for example, Gomme (CPh 1925) pp. 1-25; Seltman (G & R 1955) pp. 119-24). For additional references, see Pomeroy (Arethusa 1973) pp. 140-41.

[11]See, for example the following: in Arist. Pol. 1260 a 8-11 it is said that by nature men rule women; in Pol. 1260 a 20-24 Aristotle distinguishes a woman's courage from that of a man; in Th. 2. 45. 2 (Pericles' "Funeral Oration") we read that great glory belongs to a woman ἧς ἂν ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾖ ; in Lys. 3. 6-7 we find that some women were even too modest to be seen by men who were relatives; D. 47. 53 implies that for a strange man to enter uninvited the living quarters of a free

woman was a most heinous crime; in X. Oec. 7. 5-6 it is said that girls up to the age of fifteen should be trained to see and hear as little as possible and to keep as silent as possible in order that they may be good wives.

[12]See Haigh (1968) pp. 328-31.

[13]Pomeroy (1975) p. 60 points out that one cannot treat women in antiquity as "an undifferentiated mass", and that the social class and economic position of a woman would largely determine her behaviour.

[14]North (1966) p. 54 points out that Ismene (like Chrysothemis in Sophocles' Electra) possesses "only what Plato was to describe in the Republic as sophrosyne ὡς πλήθει and in the Phaedo as sophrosyne δημοτική - a virtue that is habitual, rather than philosophical, and consists mainly in obedience to rulers and control of appetites. Neither Plato nor Sophocles would regard this as anything but a low level of the virtue."

[15]Rouse (CR 1911) pp. 40-42.

[16]See Waldock (1966) pp. 126-27; Cowser (PCA 1939) pp. 38-39; Calder (GRBS 1968) p. 395; Gellie (1972) p. 38.

[17]See Jebb (1900) p. xxix; Knox (1964) p. 65; Adams (1957) p. 51; Sheppard (1947) p. 54; Simpson and Millar (G & R 1948) p. 79.

[18]So Kirkwood (1958) pp. 120-21; Waldock (1966) p. 133, note 1; Levy (TAPhA 1963) p. 142.

[19]See Calder (GRBS 1968) p. 398.

[20]See Ronnet (1969) p. 112, note 3: "On ne peut pas parler vraiment de contagion d'héroïsme; nature faible et douce, Ismène reste fidèle à elle-même: elle n'a pas eu le courage d'agir avec sa soeur, mais elle n'a pas non plus la force de vivre sans elle."

[21]Jebb (1900) p. 107.

[22]Kells (BICS 1963) p. 53.

[23]Ibid, p. 54.

[24]Ibid. pp. 54-55.

[25]Jebb (1900) on 559 f.

[26]Kells (BICS 1963) p. 55.

[27]See Musurillo (1967) pp. 37-38; MacKay (TAPhA 1962) p. 166.

[28]Gellie (1972) p. 32.

[29]For a discussion of the similarity in character between Creon in the Antigone and Oedipus in the Oedipus Tyrannus, see Else (AHAW 1976) pp. 80 ff., who comments on p. 81: "Oidipous is an authentic great- and irascible- man; Kreon. . . is only a little man trying to be a great one."

[30]Knox (1964) p. 89 says: "To Antigone's blind, exclusive loyalty to blood relationship he opposes an equally blind and exclusive loyalty to the polis and its ruler, himself."

[31]For a discussion of the translation of this line, see Kells (BICS 1963) pp. 48-49.

[32]Antigone does refer to Zeus in line 2 as the deity who inflicts upon herself and Ismene τῶν ἀπ' οἰδίπου κακῶν, but we see that her Zeus is identified with ἡ ξύνοικος τῶν κάτω θεῶν Δίκη (451).

[33]See Knox (1964) p. 99: "The city of Hades is nowhere-and everywhere. For this god, the cities of men had no importance; before him all men were reduced to equality in the common fate of death."

[34]It is interesting to note that Ismene uses φίλος in the same sense as Antigone (11, 99).

[35]X. HG 1. 7. 22; Th. 1. 138.6.

[36]This was Hegel's view of the Antigone, a view often misinterpreted by subsequent critics of the play. See Bradley (1919) pp. 73-75).

[37]As Gellie (1972) p. 33 aptly puts it: "This is something that goes deeper than the approval of political thinkers or the disapproval of religious thinkers. We are made to feel in our stomachs that this is no way to treat the body of a human being."

[38]Some critics, for example, MacKay (TAPhA 1962) p. 169, claim that Creon acts as a democratic leader, but the evidence presented to support this stand (S. Ant. 8, 60, 79, 160-61) cannot counter the evidence for his tyrannical attitude; see Gellie (1972) pp. 33-34, p. 283 note 8.

[39]Arist. Pol. 1313 b 30 says: τυραννικὸν δὲ τὸ μάλιστ' ἀπιστεῖν τοῖς φίλοις, ὡς βουλομένων μὲν πάντων δυναμένων δὲ μάλιστα τούτων.

[40]cf. Shakespeare King Lear I. iv: "How sharper than a
serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child."

[41]See Th. 2. 37. 1. In the same chapter, Thucydides records Pericles as having claimed that he and his fellow Athenians obey both these laws which are written and ὅσοι ἄγραφοι ὄντες αἰσχύνην ὁμολογουμένην φέρουσιν. This is not the case with Creon in the Antigone.

[42]See Waldock (1966) p. 123: "The play, in its later phases, is no longer about a conflict of law; it is about stubbornness and self-will, about the sin of refusing to listen, about a man who would never be told."

[43]See Rosivach (ICS 1979) p. 23.

[44]MacKay (TAPhA 1962) p. 166 claims: "Creon is no Pentheus; he has no quarrel with the gods. He sincerely believes, until Tiresias remonstrates with him, that he is doing the gods an acceptable service." This is not the case; Creon is not concerned with the gods. He ignores Haemon's warning that he is offending them, and he does not yield before Teiresias until the seer speaks of what directly affects him and terrifies the egotistical Creon into submission. For the argument that Creon suffers from the same impious pride as Pentheus, see Bowra (1944) p. 71.

[45]See Knox (1964) p. 116: "It is Antigone who, by her last defiant, self-willed act, executes the sentence the gods have passed on her enemy."

[46]See Kamerbeek (1978) pp. 31-32.

[47]See Whitman (1951) p. 96.

[48]Easterling (G & R 1977) p. 121.

[49]Waldock (1966) p. 115.

[50]But cf. Whitman (1951) p. 91.

[51]Ibid. pp. 91-92: "One suspects the chorus in Sophocles of being an intentional symbol of the inadequacy of everyday morality to judge the ultimate questions."

[52]See, for example, Kitto (1956) p. 176 f.; Plescia (Aevum 1976) pp.129 ff.

[53]See Agard (CPh 1937) p. 264, who refers to the "special intensity" of Antigone's relationship with Polyneices, and comes very close to saying that there is something abnormal about it.

[54]This theory was first advanced by Adams (CR 1931) and has recently received support by McCall (YClS 1972).

[55]McCall (YClS 1972) pp. 109-10.

[56]See Jebb (1900) on 253 f.

[57]See Bradshaw (CQ 1962) pp. 201-2.

[58]Ibid. pp. 202-3.

[59]Jebb (1900) on 438.

[60]See Fitton Brown (PCPhS 1966) pp. 19-20.

[61]See Cowser (PCA 1939) pp. 38-39; Calder (GRBS 1968) p. 395; Gellie (1972) p. 38.

[62]But cf. McCall (YClS 1972) pp. 115-16.

[63]See Owen (UTQ 1936) pp. 229-31; Calder (GRBS 1968) pp. 397-98.

[64]See Owen (UTQ 1936) p. 231. Calder (GRBS 1968) p. 397 comments: "We are not told in the text why Antigone returned. . . . Therefore, because no reason is given in the text, no reason exists, and the question is an irrelevant one that ought not to be posed and cannot be answered."

[65]Bradshaw (CQ 1962) p. 206, for example, says of the question: "This is a valid question and it deserves a reasonable answer."

[66]See Norwood (1920) p. 140.

[67]See Cowser (PCA 1939) pp. 39-40.

[68]Hor. Od. 1. 28. 35-36.

[69]See Jebb (1900) on 429.

[70]See Bradshaw (CQ 1962) p. 208; see Alexiou (1974) pp. 10 ff. on funeral lamentation.

[71]See Coleman (PCPhS 1972) p. 6, note 2, who points out that although Creon is, like Antigone, directly descended from Cadmus, he is not in the direct line of the kingship. On p. 15 he comments on the desirability of the match between Antigone and Haemon from a dynastic point of view, observing: "From this point of view Ismene would have been an equally suitable match, and it is likely that Creon's words to her after he had announced that Haemon's betrothed was to die- ἀρώσιμοι γὰρ χαὶ τέρμων εἰσὶν γύαι (569)- were directed precisely to this end."

[72]See, for example, Jebb (1900) p. 110; Dawe (1978) pp. 106-7; Campbell (1879) pp. 505-6; Kamerbeek (1978) p. 115.

[73]See Gellie (1972) pp. 40-42.

[74]See Kitto (1956) p. 163). Dawe (1978) p. 107 says: ". . . it is perverse to attribute the words 'Dearest Haemon' not to the fiancée but to a prospective sister-in-law, unless some positive gain accrues from so doing." In response to Dawe's implicit challenge, it may be observed that there is something positive to be gained by giving the line to Ismene: Antigone's tragic isolation is not diminished nor is there anything to detract from her absolute devotion to Polyneices if she does not express affection for Haemon.

[75]Linforth (UCPCPh 1961) p. 209 comments: ". . . the superlative 'dearest' does not necessarily imply such love as Antigone may be supposed to have for Haemon. It is frequently used by persons whose feelings have been deeply stirred in addressing persons with whom they have no bond of intimate affection." He cites as examples: S. Tr. 232; S. El. 1227, 1398; S. Ph. 242; S. OC 607.

[76]For a parallel usage see S. El. 1110: τὴν σὴν κληδόνα, E. Heracl. 284: τὸ σὸν Ἄργος.

[77]Jebb (1900) pp. 258-63 and Whitman (1951) pp. 263-64 note 31 give detailed accounts of the arguments for and against this passage. Both scholars reject it as spurious.

[78]See Jebb (1900) on 909 ff.

[79]Arist. Rh. 1417 a 9 quotes lines 911-12.

[80]Knox (1964) p. 104.

[81]See Kamerbeek (1978) p. 159 for the explanation commonly put forward (with variations) by critics in defence of the lines.

[82]See Jebb (1900) p. 260.

[83]See Else (AHAW 1976) p. 51.

[84]Gellie (1972) p. 44 comments that Haemon is prevented from talking of love by the very nature of Greek tragic poetry, in which "the functions of the dialectic and the lyric modes of address are sharply distinguished." It may be observed, however, that such a distinction does not seem to affect Phaedra in E. Hipp.

[85]See Webster (1967) p. 182.

[86]See Nauck (1926) pp. 404-5.

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