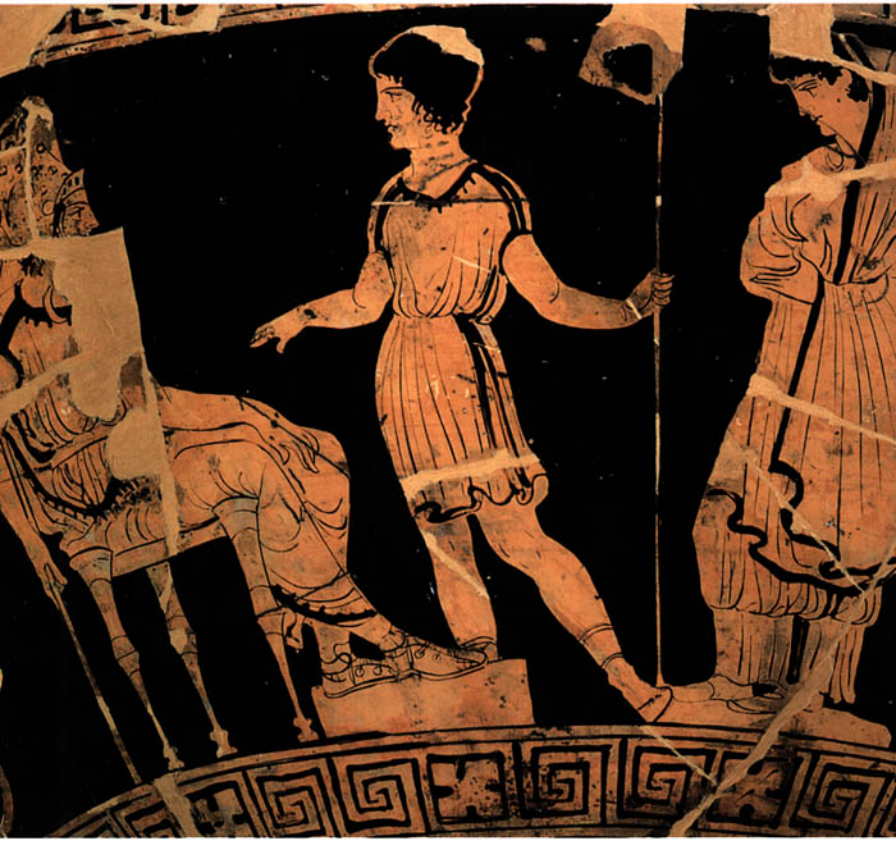
THE GREEK TRAGEDY IN NEW TRANSLATIONS



ANTIGONE

Sophocles

Translated by Reginald Gibbons and Charles Segal

THE GREEK TRAGEDY
IN NEW TRANSLATIONS

GENERAL EDITORS
Peter Burian and Alan Shapiro

SOPHOCLES: Antigone

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Translated by
REGINALD GIBBONS
and
CHARLES SEGAL

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EDITORS' FOREWORD

"*The Greek Tragedy in New Translations* is based on the conviction that poets like Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides can only be properly rendered by translators who are themselves poets. Scholars may, it is true, produce useful and perceptive versions. But our most urgent present need is for a *re-creation* of these plays—as though they had been written, freshly and greatly, by masters fully at home in the English of our own times."

With these words, the late William Arrowsmith announced the purpose of this series, and we intend to honor that purpose. As was true of most of the volumes that began to appear in the 1970s—first under Arrowsmith's editorship, later in association with Herbert Golder—those for which we bear editorial responsibility are products of close collaboration between poets and scholars. We believe (as Arrowsmith did) that the skills of both are required for the difficult and delicate task of transplanting these magnificent specimens of another culture into the soil of our own place and time, to do justice both to their deep differences from our patterns of thought and expression and to their palpable closeness to our most intimate concerns. Above all, we are eager to offer contemporary readers dramatic poems that convey as vividly and directly as possible the splendor of language, the complexity of image and idea, and the intensity of emotion and originals. This entails, among much else, the recognition that the tragedies were meant for performance—as scripts for actors—to be sung and danced as well as spoken. It demands writing of inventiveness, clarity, musicality, and dramatic power. By such standards we ask that these translations be judged.

This series is also distinguished by its recognition of the need of nonspecialist readers for a critical introduction informed by the best recent scholarship, but written clearly and without condescension.

Each play is followed by notes designed not only to elucidate obscure references but also to mediate the conventions of the Athenian stage as well as those features of the Greek text that might otherwise go unnoticed. The notes are supplemented by a glossary of mythical and geographical terms that should make it possible to read the play without turning elsewhere for basic information. Stage directions are sufficiently ample to aid readers in imagining the action as they read. Our fondest hope, of course, is that these versions will be staged not only in the minds of their readers but also in the theaters to which, after so many centuries, they still belong.

A NOTE ON THE SERIES FORMAT

A series such as this requires a consistent format. Different translators, with individual voices and approaches to the material in hand, cannot be expected to develop a single coherent style for each of the three tragedians, much less make clear to modern readers that, despite the differences among the tragedians themselves, the plays share many conventions and a generic, or period, style. But they can at least share a common format and provide similar forms of guidance to the reader.

1. *Spelling of Greek names*

Orthography is one area of difference among the translations that requires a brief explanation. Historically, it has been common practice to use Latinized forms of Greek names when bringing them into English. Thus, for example, Oedipus (not Oidipous) and Clytemnestra (not Klutaimestra) are customary in English. Recently, however, many translators have moved toward more precise transliteration, which has the advantage of presenting the names as both Greek and new, instead of Roman and neoclassical importations into English. In the case of so familiar a name as Oedipus, however, transliteration risks the appearance of pedantry or affectation. And in any case, perfect consistency cannot be expected in such matters. Reader will feel the same discomfort with "Athenai" as the chief city of Greece as they would with "Platon" as the author of the *Republic*.

The earlier volumes in this series adopted as a rule a "mixed" orthography in accordance with the considerations outlined above. The most familiar names retain their Latinate forms, the rest are transliterated; *-os* rather than Latin *-us* is adopted for the termination of masculine names, and Greek diphthongs (such as Iphige*neia* for Latin Iphigenia) are retained. Some of the later volumes continue this practice, but where translators have preferred to use a more consistent practice of transliteration of Latinization, we have honored their wishes.

2. *Stage directions*

The ancient manuscripts of the Greek plays do not supply stage directions (though the ancient commentators often provide information relevant to staging, delivery, "blocking," etc.). Hence stage directions must be inferred from words and situations and our knowledge of Greek theatrical conventions. At best this is a ticklish and uncertain procedure. But it is surely preferable that good stage directions should be provided by the translator than that readers should be left to their own devices in visualizing action, gesture, and spectacle. Ancient tragedy was austere and "distanced" by means of masks, which means that the reader must not expect the detailed intimacy ("He shrugs and turns wearily away," "She speaks with deliberate slowness, as though to emphasize the point," etc.) that characterizes stage directions in modern naturalistic drama.

3. *Numbering of lines*

For the convenience of the reader who may wish to check the translation against the original, or vice versa, the lines have been numbered according to both the Greek and English texts. The lines of the translation have been numbered in multiples of ten, and those numbers have been set in the right-hand margin. The (inclusive) Greek numeration will be found bracketed at the top of the page. The Notes that follow the text have been keyed to both numerations, the line numbers of the translation in **bold**, followed by the Greek lines in regular type, and the same convention is used for all references to specific passages (of the translated plays only) in both the Notes and the Introduction.

Readers will doubtless note that in many plays the English lines outnumber the Greek, but they should not therefore conclude that the translator has been unduly prolix. In some cases the reason is simply that the translator has adopted the free-flowing norms of modern Anglo-American prosody, with its brief-breath-and emphasis-determined lines, and its habit of indicating cadence and caesuras by line length and setting rather than by conventional punctuation. Even where translators have preferred to cast dialogue in more regular five-beat or six-beat lines, the greater compactness of Greek diction is likely to result in a substantial disparity in Greek and English numerations.

Durham, N.C. PETER BURIAN
Chapel Hill, N.C. ALAN SHAPIRO
2003

PREFACE

The final stages of my work on the play overlapped with a Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which was awarded for another project, but nevertheless contributed to the efficient completion of the book. I am deeply grateful to the Endowment for their support.

I completed work on this volume at a time when Antigone's lament about being between upper and lower worlds took on an intensely personal meaning as I faced a life-threatening illness. I cannot list all the friends, colleagues, and students, past and present, who offered their help, encouragement, and prayers, but they are all gratefully remembered. I would like particularly to thank my Harvard colleagues for their many kindnesses, especially Kathleen Coleman, Albert Henrichs, and Richard Thomas, chair of the department. I am deeply grateful to the medical professionals whose expertise and concern enabled me to finish my share in the volume and indeed to continue looking on the light of the sun: Drs. Christopher Colie, Keith Stuart, and David S. Rosenthal and Ms. Judith Podymatis, RN. My collaborator, Reg Gibbons, not only made several long trips so that we could work together in the best possible way, by face-to-face discussions, but remained a steadfast and involved friend on whom I could also count for support. I am grateful to George Steiner for taking the time to read the manuscript at a time when he was busy delivering the Norton Lectures at Harvard. To my wife, Nancy Jones, my gratitude for her ever-present love and devotion at a period of particular adversity goes beyond what words can express.

Cambridge, Massachusetts CHARLES SEGAL
September 2001

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ANTIGONE

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INTRODUCTION

For the nineteenth-century idealist German philosopher Hegel, *Antigone* is "one of the most sublime, and in every respect most consummate, work[s] of art human effort ever produced. Not a detail in this tragedy but is of consequence."[1] Hegel's dazzling accolade is typical of the high esteem for the play in the early nineteenth century.[2] For Hegel, *Antigone* plays a major role in the evolution of European consciousness, one of whose early stages is exemplified by *Antigone*'s conflict between State and individual, or more accurately between "the public law of the State and the instinctive family-love and duty towards a brother." This division in turn is an aspect of a larger conflict between Nature and Spirit and so a step toward the emergence of Spirit (*Geist*). The individual bearer of such consciousness is essentially tragic because he or she enters into the division between the divine law, embodied in the *polis* or state, and the human law, embodied in the family, and in entering into that division is destroyed. And yet "it is precisely this destruction," as George Steiner explains Hegel's view, "which constitutes man's eminent worth and which allows his progression towards the unification of consciousness and of Spirit on 'the other side of history.' "[3] In terms of Hegel's emphasis on action and his conception of fate in Greek tragedy, Antigone, rather than Kreon, is the full bearer of the tragic because she self-consciously decides to act and therefore chooses the path of her destiny.[4] The "classical" perfection of *Antigone* lies not only in the clarity and purity with which it develops this conflict but also in its representation of divinity, which

1. G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Fine Art*, quoted from the Osmaston translation (London 1920), in Anne and Henry Paolucci, eds., *Hegel on Tragedy* (Garden City, N.Y., 1962), 178.
2. See George Steiner, *Antigones* (Oxford, 1984), 1–19.
3. Ibid., 31.
4. Ibid., 36.

goes beyond the horrific chthonic gods of the old myths and the old religion to more impersonal gods, who do not appear on the stage as anthropomorphic beings and are more important for the principles they endorse than for any visual effects.

The weaknesses of Hegel's reading have long been clear.[5] It is as simplistic to identify Kreon with "the law of the State" as it is to identify Antigone with individualism *tout court*. Even Antigone's devotion to family love, or *philia*, is problematical, given the incestuous bonds within this family and her harsh treatment of her sister, Ismene. Antigone, to be sure, may be identified with the emergence of an individual ethical consciousness that resists the domination of certain laws that have been imposed by Thebes' present ruler, but the play calls into question whether these laws may be associated with an abstract, impersonal Law of the State. It is questionable to identify a small fifth-century city-state or *polis* with the modern abstract notion of State. The *polis* of *Antigone* is rather the total civic space in which the religious and the political, the private and the public are closely intertwined, and the fact that they are so intertwined creates the tragedy. Each protagonist sees only half of the whole, and each acts as if the two realms are independent of the other.

Nevertheless, Hegel's influence should not be taken lightly, and his articulation of his position in his earlier work offers a more nuanced and profound reading. In Hegel's dialectical thinking of this period, the position of human and divine changes places. The family, in its honoring of the dead, can also embody the divine law, while the city-state's law, as the creation of human beings and as the visible regulator of day-to-day affairs, can embody the human. In the fact that the two sides share in both human and divine law lies the irreconcilably tragic nature of the conflict. And this conflict is also gendered between the "feminine-ontological" and the "masculine-political," between the woman's domestic world of hearth and home and the man's public world of civic assemblies and legislative bodies.[6]

Political, historical, and social considerations add further nuances. Antigone is opposing not the city's Law (*nomos*) as a totality, but rather Kreon's specific "decree" forbidding the burial of her brother's body. She is primarily the champion not of the individual against the State but of the ties of blood and birth that rest on the solidarity of the family.

5. Among the earliest criticism is Goethe's, in J. W. von Goethe, *Conversations with Eckermann*, trans. John Oxenford (1850; reprint New York, 1998), 174–78 (March 28, 1827). For further discussion see, e.g., Steiner, *Antigones*, 49–51; T. C. W. Oudemans and A. P. M. H Lardinois, *Tragic Ambiguity* (Leiden, 1987), 110–17.

6. Steiner, 34–35.

More specifically, she opposes to Kreon's authority the traditional authority of the old aristocratic families to honor and bury their dead. The care for the dead was especially the prerogative of women, and it was increasingly restricted in Athens in the sixth and fifth centuries as the democracy sought to limit the power of the aristocratic clans, but it was nevertheless widely respected.[7] The Athenian institution of the public, city funeral for warriors who died in battle, established around the middle of the century, sharpened the conflict between the family's mourning and the public ceremony, and this conflict is doubtless in the play's background.[8] Against Kreon's laws (*nomoi*) Antigone sets the "unwritten laws" that pertain to the burial of the dead, which are also the "custom-laws" (another meaning of *nomoi* or *nomima*) that have a place within every city and rest on the sanctity, as she says, of "Justice, who resides in the same house with the gods below the earth" and on the authority of Zeus himself (translation 495–501 / Greek 450–55).[9] Thus, while she is so human and moving in the fragile strength of her defiance of the ruler, she has on her side the weight of religious tradition, the universal recognition of the rights of burial, and the performance of those offices for the dead that traditionally belong to women in the *polis* and in the family.

Viewed more broadly, *Antigone* brings down to earth and to purely human characters some of the conflicts of Aiskhylos' *Oresteia*. Antigone's position has some affinities with that of the Furies in Aiskhylos' conflict between Olympian and chthonic, upper and lower worlds, in the last play of the *Oresteia*, the *Eumenides*. Here the newer and younger Olympians, Apollo and Athena, who belong to the reign of Zeus, are identified with the male-dominated political institutions of the city, whereas the ancient gods, the Erinyes or Furies, daughters of primordial Night, defend the bonds of blood and birth and the rights of the mother and of Earth in their vengeful pursuit of the matricide, Orestes. To be sure, the issue of *Antigone* is burial, not vengeance; the cosmic order is in the background, not the foreground; and the focus is on the family as a whole and not on the rights of the father as against those of the mother. *Antigone* also presents the conflict in terms of the more impersonal "eternal laws of the gods" rather than through the

7. For the importance of female lament in the play see my *Sophocles' Tragic World: Divinity, Nature, and Society* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 119–20, 125–27, 135–36.

8. This aspect of the play is stressed by William Tyrrell and Larry Bennett, *Recapturing Sophocles' Antigone* (Lanham, Md., 1998), especially 5–14, 115–17.

9. Bernard Knox, *The Heroic Temper* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964), 97, shows that the (literally) "unwritten and secure custom-laws (*nomima*) of the gods" of which Antigone speaks in 500–501 / 454–55 refer primarily to the sanctity surrounding burial rites. Yet her word *nomoi*, literally "laws," in 498 / 452, also indicates that broader issues are involved.

awe-inspiring mythical presences of the Furies. Nevertheless, the framing of this conflict between male and female and between civic order and primordial religious tradition bears comparison with the *Oresteia*. Antigone too looks for support from the divinities of the lower world (in the lines cited above; also in **593** / 542), and her vindication comes, finally from Hades and the Furies (**1145–47** / 1074–75).

Comparison with the *Oresteia*, however, also reveals how poorly the Hegelian scheme of thesis-antithesis-synthesis fits the play. *Antigone* has none of the resolution that ends the *Eumenides*, where the Furies finally accept the Olympian persuasion of Athena and consequently are reconciled with the *polis* of Athens and transform themselves into the more benign and acceptable Eumenides, the "Kindly Ones." In *Antigone* the conflict between the blood ties within the family, to which the women are particularly devoted, and the realm of political action that belongs to men is played out almost entirely on the human level. The gods appear only as the remote agents of retributive justice; and the mortal representatives of family ties and civic duty respectively both suffer a terrible doom, Antigone by the despairing suicide of her death in her cave-prison, Kreon by the blows that leave him disoriented, isolated, and totally crushed at the end.

The Hegelian notion, however, that both sides have some degree of right on their side—or, as A. C. Bradley will later rephrase it, that there is a division in the ethical substance with a resultant "violent self-restitution of the divided spiritual unity"[10]—has the merit of getting us into the fundamental issues of the play. Conflict is the heart of this work, which is so structured that each protagonist can act only by attacking and destroying the central values of the other. The play offers conflicting definitions, explicit or implicit, of the basic terms of the human condition: friend and enemy, citizen and ruler, father and son, male and female, justice and injustice, reverence and irreverence, purity and pollution, honor and dishonor, and even (in the Ode on Man) conflicting judgments of what is *anthrôpos*, a human being—powerful or helpless, something "wonderful" or "terrible" (both of these, meanings of the same word, *deinon*). Not only are the definitions in conflict, but the terms themselves become ambiguous or (as in the case of Antigone's "holy wrongdoing") paradoxical.[11] Antigone and Kreon use the same words to mean different things, like *philos* and *ekhthros*, "dear

10. A. C. Bradley, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy" (1909), in Paolucci (above, n. 1), 385.

11. On these conflicts and ambiguities in the larger context of the nature of Greek tragedy, see Jean-Pierre Vernant, "Tensions and Ambiguities in Greek Tragedy," in J.-P. Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (1972, 1986), trans. J. Lloyd (New York, 1990), 29–48, especially 41–43.

one" and "enemy," or *nomos*, law. Antigone's incestuous birth complicates these ambiguities of language by confusing the basic terms of kinship: in the family of Oidipous, son and husband, brother and son, sister and daughter horribly coincide. What in fact sets the plot into motion is the mutual slaughter of the incestuously begotten sons/brothers, Polyneikes and Eteokles, who are simultaneously too close in their claims on the inherited throne and too distant in their murderous struggle, simultaneously the nearest of "dear ones," *philoi*, and the most bitter of "enemies," *ekhthroi*. The play's obsessive harping on words for "self-," "common," "one another" is the verbal expression of this deadly fusion of same and opposite that underlies the tragedy of the house of Oidipous.

The ambiguities of *philia*, being near-and-dear, in this house are enacted in the opening scene between the two sisters. The language of intimate kinship in Antigone's opening address to Ismene is painfully fractured by the end of that scene, and Antigone's virtual identification with her sister in the opening line, with its untranslatable juxtaposition of *koinon autadelphon*, literally, "shared/sharing self-sister," has turned to scorn and near hatred by the time the two young women leave the stage.

In this opening scene Antigone not only sets out the main issues but also displays all the contradictions and dangers that define her character: her intensity of feeling, the single-mindedness of her devotion to family, her unbending will, her readiness to defy the entire city in the name of what she believes, her involvement with the dead, and her willingness to face death if necessary. With sarcasm she shows her independence and bitterness when she recounts that "the noble Kreon has proclaimed" his order against the burial of Polyneikes (**39–43** / 31–34), while at the same time she personalizes the conflict and dramatizes its immediacy and the consequent need to act decisively. She has a visceral sense of Polyneikes' exposed corpse—she not only recounts that "no one may hide it inside a grave, wail over it or weep for it," but she also pictures it as horribly desecrated by vultures, "a sweet-tasting treasure that birds will spy and feed on with their greedy joy" (**34–38** / 27–30). That this image is distinctive, we see from comparing Kreon's otherwise similar description of his decree later (**229–35** / 203–6).[12]

The paradox of what Antigone calls her "holy crime" (**90** / 74) shows her understanding of her isolation but also signals the moral complexity

12. Kreon says "eaten by birds and dogs" and adds the epithet "shameful for anyone to see" (or literally the detail of "disfigurement" or "outrage"), but he does not use Antigone's more vivid expression.

of her forthcoming act.[13] When Ismene refuses to help, Antigone turns abruptly from affection to hatred. She openly accepts the folly of her own resolve, and she is determined to die the "noble death" of the male warrior, on the model of the Homeric hero. Her claim to the honor that she will win from her deed, her determination to "lie beside" her brother in death in her "holy wrongdoing," and her open defiance of the city at a time of crisis, would almost certainly alarm the audience of male Athenian citizens, accustomed to the view that women do not challenge men (as Ismene states in 76–77 / 61–62), especially in the all-male areas of politics and public life.

The ensuing ode, sung by the chorus of Theban elders, reveals the one-sidedness of Antigone's position in the context of the city's fears and so sets the stage for an initially sympathetic view of Kreon. The chorus describes the battle of the preceding night in images of animality, blood, madness, and fire that show the horror of what the city might have suffered had the fierce enemy warriors broken through the walls. Entering directly after the ode, Kreon vehemently denounces Polyneikes, the attacker who came to "burn their country and the temples with columns around them and the offerings inside" (328–29 / 285–87). On the other hand, the absolute refusal to bury a traitor's body, though legally justified, could be perceived as harsh. A traitor's corpse was often cast outside the city walls, where family members might bury it and where the danger of pollution to the city would be avoided. This is in fact the punishment specified for Polyneikes' corpse by Aiskhylos in *Seven against Thebes* and by Euripides in *Phoinikian Women*.[14] Elsewhere too in Greek tragedy the refusal of burial is regarded as cruel and impious, as in Sophokles' *Aias* and Euripides' *Suppliants*.[15] In the latter play, Theseus, the civilizing hero and model king of Athens, heeds his mother's plea to defy Kreon and the victorious Thebans, bury the fallen Argive warriors, and thereby "stop them from overturning the

13. With 90 / 74 see the similar phrasing of 990–91 / 924 and 1011 / 943.

14. Aiskhylos, *Seven against Thebes*, 1013–25; Euripides, *Phoinikian Women*, 1629–30. See Patricia E. Easterling, "Constructing the Heroic," in Christopher Pelling, ed., *Greek Tragedy and the Historian* (Oxford, 1997), 26–28, who argues that Kreon's punitive treatment does not correspond precisely to any known historical situation in the fifth century. The Aiskhylean version, however, though specifying burial outside, does nevertheless include exposing the body to dogs (no birds, however) and the prohibition against burial by the family (*Seven*, 1013–15). The date of the ending of the *Seven*, however, remains controversial, and it may have been influenced by Sophokles: see Appendix 2. For further discussion of the problem of the justification of Kreon's decree, see Steiner, *Antigones*, 114–20, and Oudemans and Lardinois, *Tragic Ambiguity*, 101–2, 162–63.

15. For Euripides' *Suppliants* see the Note on 1153–58 / 1080–83. In *Antigone*, 1133–61 / 1064–86, Teiresias is probably referring to the tradition that Theseus, King of Athens, intervened against Kreon for the burial of the exposed corpses of the attacking Argive warriors: see Griffith's note on Greek lines 1080–83.

custom laws (*nomima*) of all Greece" (*Suppliants* 311–12). The Kreon of *Antigone* even seems to relish his punitive authority as he dwells on the details of exposing Polyneikes' corpse and on his specific steps to ensure that body will remain unburied (**230–35** / 203–6, **248** / 217, **451–58** / 408–14). He gives four lines (in the Greek) to the honors due to Eteokles, nine to the defiling of the traitor's body (**217–35** / 194–206)—a touch of a cruelty that will be seen again later when he sends Antigone to her death.[16] The repeated first-person statements of his opening speech too, though innocuous enough in their context, also sound a note of authoritarian willfulness and self-important sententiousness that will emerge more ominously later (**214–15** / 191, **223–24** / 198, **238–40** / 209–10).[17]

Both protagonists turn out to have a relation to the city-state (*polis*) different from what the opening scenes might suggest. Kreon's view of *nomos*, law, one of the crucial words in the play, proves to rest on too narrow a vision of the city. The word *nomos* also means "custom" and can refer to "practice" or "convention" so embedded in society that it has virtually the authority of the "laws" that derive from formal legislation. (The two meanings of *nomos* are particularly important in Sophokles' time, in democratic Athens of the fifth century, which is very much aware of the sovereign power of the assembled citizenry, the *dêmos*, to create new laws, abolish old, and replace or modify traditional "laws," and thereby codify as statute or written decree what had been more loosely defined as "custom-law.")

Both protagonists, however, assume that the gods defend their *nomos*. Kreon increasingly regards the law of the city as an extension of his own authority and assumes, erroneously, that the order of the gods is congruent with what he sees as the order of the *polis*. Antigone, in defying Kreon's laws on the grounds of the "unwritten laws" of the gods, opens up the definition of both law and the city in directions that Kreon does not understand. The city does, in fact, have obligations to the dead and to the chthonic divinities who protect them and watch over the rituals that separate the dead citizens from the living and move them to their appropriate realm in Hades. Later in the play the prophet Teiresias will announce the dire effect of violating these "unwritten laws" (**1133–61** / 1064–86); and he will show that Kreon's attempt to absorb ritual practice and the politics of the gods into his own politics of the city rests on a one-sided vision of both the city and the gods.

16. See, e.g., **838–42** / 777–80 and **944–50** / 885–90, and the Notes on these passages.

17. On the reservations that the language of Kreon's opening speech may cause the spectator, see Felix Budelmann, *The Language of Sophocles* (Cambridge, Eng., 2000), 75–78.

If Antigone seems initially to disregard the legitimate claims and needs of the *polis*, the course of the action dissipates the sympathy for Kreon aroused by the first ode and by the civic sentiments of his opening speech. The turning point is the scene with Haimon, who, for the first time, allows other voices in the city to be heard (747–55 / 692–700). Antigone, defying Kreon to his face earlier, had said that the elders of the chorus shared her view but had their mouths sealed by fear of Kreon, whose rule she describes as *turannis*, "one-man rule" (556–58 / 506–7). The word does not yet carry the full associations of our word "tyranny," but it does connote autocratic power, the absolute rule of a single man, and it begins to undercut Kreon's claims to represent the city as a whole. Knowing his father, Haimon cannily begins with a declaration of loyalty and obedience but then endorses Antigone's position with increasing force. He might be thought a biased reporter of the citizens' sentiments when he echoes Antigone's words and defends her as one who merits "golden honor" (754 / 699). Teiresias' warnings, however, will validate this other voice and give it the authority of the gods.

In condemning Antigone to death, Kreon callously disregards her marriage with Haimon. "It's Hades who will stop this wedding for me," Kreon says to Ismene (626 / 575). But Hades in fact fulfills this marriage, later, in its way; as the messenger recounts, Haimon "in the end has had his wedding ceremony—but in the house of Hades" (1325–27 / 1240–41). "It's Hades who desires these laws" for the living and for the dead, Antigone says earlier, in defending herself before Kreon (570 / 519). Yet Kreon begins with confidence in his power to use Hades—that is, death—as an instrument of political control. However, Hades' laws operate more terribly on living and dead than even Antigone had imagined. "Only from Hades will he not procure some means of escape," the chorus had sung in their ode on the achievements of human civilization (403–5 / 361–62), and their pronouncement is spectacularly fulfilled in Kreon's doom.

Kreon carefully arranges Antigone's death to leave himself and his city free of pollution. But her suicide in the cave doubly undoes his schemes. She takes control of her own death and turns it into a polluting death after all.[18] She thereby initiates a cycle of pollutions in Kreon's house parallel to the pollutions that his nonburial of Polyneikes has brought to the city. At the end, when Kreon's wife's suicide leaves him totally bereft, he cries out, "Ah, Harbor of Hades never to be

18. On Antigone's polluted death, see Nicole Loraux, *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman* (1985), trans. Anthony Forster (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 31–32.