



Oedipus Tyrannus

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Places Discussed

*Thebes (theebz). Ancient city in east-central Greece, northwest of Athens, where all the action in Sophocles' play takes place. As the seat of power of King Oedipus, Thebes represents civil power, though as Oedipus comes to realize, his royal power must be subservient to the divine power of Apollo, whose temple is nearby.

*Mount Cithaeron (si-THE-ron). Mountain in southern Greece on which Oedipus was chained and abandoned as an infant. The image of the mountain as the mysterious "parent" of the king whose parentage is clouded continually recurs throughout the choral odes.

*Trivia. Crossroad where the roads from Daulia, Delphi, and Thebes meet. At this auspicious location Oedipus kills, in self-defense, a man who he later learns was his father. The converging of the roads echoes the intertwining threads of Oedipus's fate.

*Delphi. Oracle at the Temple of Apollo that is the source of all divine wisdom for the ancient Greeks. To Oedipus, it represents the place where he learns the truth about his past.

*Corinth. Distant Greek city from which a messenger arrives at the end of the play to announce the death of King Polybus, who Oedipus mistakenly believes is his father. Corinth represents the untroubled home of the only parents Oedipus ever knew.

Bibliography:

Kirkwood, Gordon MacDonald. *A Study of Sophoclean Drama*. 1958. Reprint. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1967. Examines and analyzes the structures Sophocles uses and his methods of dramatic composition. Compares his plays in considering the characters, irony, illustrative forms, and the use of diction and oracles in each. Excellent coverage of *Oedipus Tyrannus*.

Scodel, Ruth. *Sophocles*. Boston: Twayne, 1984. Provides synopses of the seven Sophoclean plays. Considers works that may have influenced Sophocles. Considers the works' structure and the use of mythological gods and oracles. Includes a chronology of Sophocles, a bibliography, and an index.

Segal, Charles. *Oedipus Tyrannus: Tragic Heroism and the Limits of Knowledge*. New York: Twayne, 1993. Provides an extensive chronology of the life of Sophocles and gives historical and cultural background, as well as a discussion of the design and structure, for *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Refers to influences on the play and its author and discusses interpretation of the Oedipus myth.

Segal, Charles. *Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981. Discusses the seven plays of Sophocles, including *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Extensive interpretation on the identity of Oedipus, including the implications inherent in his name. Breaks down the plot and discusses it with regard to Greek language and English translation.

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Woodard, Thomas, ed. *Sophocles: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966. A fine collection of essays, including writings by Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, and Virginia Woolf. Contains a thought-provoking section on the character of Oedipus.

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