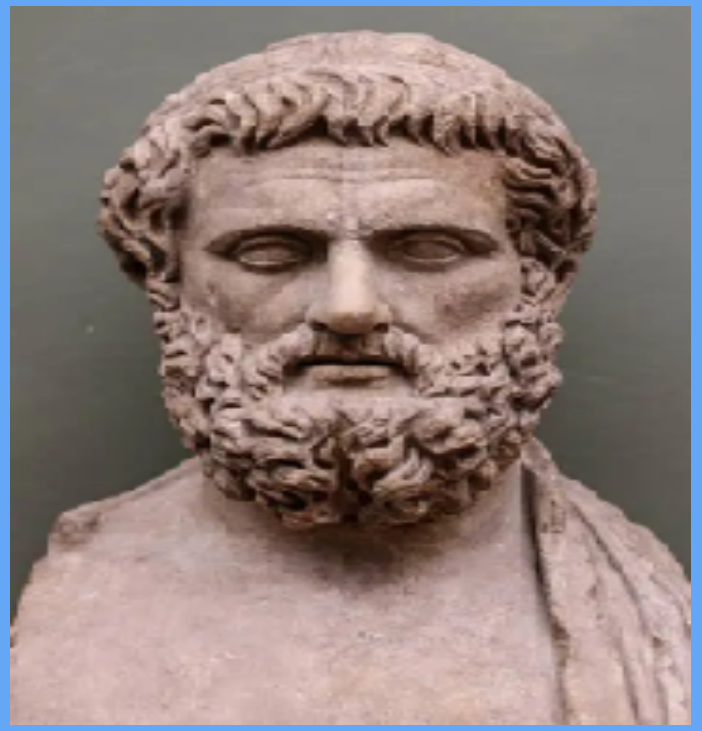


The ancient Greek playwright Sophocles and Greek tragedy ‘’Oedipus Rex’’

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Sophocles (496 BC – 406 BC) was an ancient Greek tragedian of the Classical period from Athens. Together with Aeschylus and Euripides, they are the only tragic poets whose complete works have survived. According to ancient testimonies, he appears to have written approximately **123 plays** , of which only seven tragedies have been preserved in complete form.
He was born in Colonus Hippius of Athens. He was the son of Sophillus and was educated in accordance with his family's financial comfort. He received a careful upbringing and education. He studied music under the renowned music teacher Lamprus and developed his physical and mental abilities harmoniously. At the age of fifteen, he was the leader of the chorus of ephebes who took part in the celebration of the victory at the naval battle of Salamis

He was closely associated with political and intellectual figures of his time, such as Pericles, Socrates, and Plato, and he held various high offices in politics, religious cults, and the arts.
In the years 443–442 BC, he served as treasurer of the Athenian Naval League. From 441 to 440 BC, he commanded the fleet together with Pericles in the attack against Samos, during which all the men of the island were slaughtered. In 428 BC, he was again a general alongside Thucydides, and in 413 BC he was a member of the oligarchicgovernment of Athens. He had a son with Nicostrata, who also became a poet, as well as an illegitimate son, also named Sophocles, who proved to be a more important writer than his legitimate son. The great tragic poet introduced the cult of Asclepius to Athens and was honored with the epithet Dexion, because he received the god as a guest in his home. The first celebration before the

The first celebration before the completion of the Asclepieion beneath the Acropolis of Athens took place in the enclosure of his house. He even wrote a paean in honor of Asclepius.
Sophocles composed 123 tragedies, of which 114 are known by title, but only seven have survived in complete form, among them Antigone (around 442 BC) and Electra (around 413 BC). Other surviving works include Trachiniae, Oedipus Tyrannus, Ajax, Philoctetes, and Oedipus at Colonus.
The tragedy Oedipus Tyrannus is a work by Sophocles. The date of its composition is considered unknown. It is assumed that it was first performed in 428 BC. Many critics, including Aristotle, consider Oedipus Tyrannus to be the greatest tragedy ever written. It is based on the Theban dramatic cycle, or the cycle of the Labdacids. Its central idea is the notion that human beings can never escape their fate.



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The myth and the plot of ancient Greek tragedy ‘’Oedipus Rex’’

Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus (Oedipus Rex) depicts Oedipus, the king of Thebes, attempting to save the city from a plague, only to discover tragically that he himself is the murderer of his predecessor (his father, Laius) and the husband of his mother (Jocasta). This revelation leads to Jocasta's suicide and Oedipus' self-blinding, thus fulfilling an ancient oracle.

Summary:

The Problem: Thebes is ravaged by a plague, and the people ask King Oedipus to find its cause and resolve it, just as he once did with the Sphinx.

The Search: Oedipus sends Creon to the Oracle of Delphi, which declares that the murderer of King Laius must be banished. Oedipus swears to find the culprit.

The Suspicions: The seer Tiresias and various witnesses begin to offer enigmatic clues, pointing to Oedipus himself as the guilty one.

The Truth: A messenger from Corinth (where Oedipus was raised) reveals that Polybus (the man who raised him as his father) died of natural causes. Oedipus learns that he is not Polybus' son and that his father-in-law was Laius.

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The Tragic Revelation: A shepherd, who once abandoned the infant Oedipus, confirms that Oedipus is the son of Laius and Jocasta. Jocasta then commits suicide by hanging herself, and Oedipus blinds himself, realizing that he has committed the very crimes he feared.

The End: Oedipus asks to be exiled, worrying about his daughters, and the play ends with his tragic condition and the inescapable fate that had pursued him.

The play highlights the theme of fate and human knowledge, showing how the truth, even when avoided, is ultimately revealed and destroys.

Significance of the Play:

The tragedy explores themes such as fate versus free will, knowledge, truth, and the inevitability of divine prophecies.

It emphasizes the fragility of the human condition and the destructive power of ignorance, even in powerful leaders like Oedipus