

**SOPHOCLES, PART III.
THE OEDIPUS TYRANNUS,
WITH ENGLISH NOTES**

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Sophocles, Part III. The Œdipus Tyrannus, with English Notes by Henry Browne

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HENRY BROWNE

**SOPHOCLES, PART III.
THE ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS,
WITH ENGLISH NOTES**

Arnold's School Classics.

SOPHOCLES,

EXPLAINED BY F. W. SCHNEIDEWIN.

PART III.

THE

ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS,

WITH ENGLISH NOTES,

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY THE

REV. HENRY BROWNE, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF CHICHESTER,

AND CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER.

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PREFACE.

THE *Œdipus Tyrannus* is the third play of the edition of Sophocles by Professor Schneidewin, of which the *Ajax* and *Philoctetes* have been already published in my series of School Classics. The *Œdipus Coloneus* is in the press. My former coadjutor, Mr. Paul, having sailed for his new home in the Canterbury Colony, the notes to this play have been translated by the Rev. H. Browne, of Chichester, author of the *Ordo Sæclorum*, and well known as a translator from various volumes of the "Library of the Fathers." This play has been also edited by Mr. Browne. I may add that the edition has been very favourably received by the critical reviews of Germany.

T. K. ARNOLD.

LONDON,
Nov. 29, 1851.

I will here reprint, with an addition, some *errata* that I have discovered in the notes to the second play of the series, the *Philoctetes* :

ERRATA (in the *Philoctetes*.)

- Page 59, line 512, for "to my advantage," read "to the advantage of this man," and dele the reference to the *Grammars*.
 — — — 526, for "he" [the ship personified], read "she."
 — 60, — 552, for "Ph. promises," read "Neopt. promises."
 — 61, — 617, for *ἄλκῶσι* read *ἄλκῶσαι*. (A misprint in Schneidewin.)
 — — — — for *πελά'της* read *πελά'της*. (A misprint in Eklendt's valuable *Lezicon Sophocleum*.)
 — 76, — 1092, for *ἔλουσι* read *ἐλοῦσι*.
 — 80, — 1251, for "with good reason," read "with right (on my side)."

T. K. A.

INTRODUCTION.

LAÏUS, son of Labdacus, king of Thebes, had been warned by an oracle of Apollo that he was destined to die by the hand of a son whom he should beget of his wife Jocasta, daughter of Menœceus. By what offence he had incurred this doom, Sophocles leaves untold ; not so the (pretended) oracle :—

*Αἴε Λαβδακίδη, καίδων γένος δλβιον αἰεῖς.
θῶσω τοι φίλον νιόν· ἀτὰρ πεπωρωμένον ἰστίν
σὺ καὶδὸς χεῖρσσι λιπεῖν φάος· ὧς γὰρ ἰνευσιν
Ζεὸς Κρονίδης Πίλοπος στυγεραῖς ἀραῖσι κέθῃσας,
οὐ φίλον ἤρπασας νιόν· ὃ δ' ἠέξατό σοι τάδε πάντα.*

Accordingly, a son being born to him, Laïus bound his ankles tight together, and in this condition gave him into the hands of a slave, with orders to expose him upon the mountain. So Jocasta herself tells the story, 711 ff. (cf. *Oed. C.* 969 f.), with suppression of some of the particulars, one of which the old slave himself supplies, by relating that he received the child, with command to make away with it, from the mother's own hands, 1173, its feet bound (as the messenger describes, 1034) by a thong through holes cruelly bored in its ankles, which treatment was intended, without killing it outright, to ensure its perishing, and to prevent its being received by others. Jocasta also keeps back the fact that it was on the subject of posterity that Laïus consulted Apollo, who warned him against begetting a son, cf. 1184. The slave, however, took compassion on the babe, and gave it, on Mount Cithæron, to a herdsman from Corinth, 1143: but he, instead of rearing it for himself, gave it to his childless master, King Polybus, and his wife Merope. (Pherecydes in the Schol. on 775, calls the queen Medusa, daughter of Orsilochus, son of the Alpheus; others Antiochia, daughter of Chalcon; others Περύβοια, a name matching that of the wealthy Πόλυβος, who, according to the popular tradition, was son of Hermes and Χθονοφύλη, Paus. 2, 6, 3.) With kindly affection the pair bring up the foundling, which, from its swelled feet, they name Οἰδίπους, 1036 f. He was generally accounted the first of the citizens of Corinth, until an insignificant occurrence disturbed him in his youthful felicity.

At a banquet—as he himself, 775 ff., tells the story—one of his companions, in his intoxication, twitted him with being only the pretended son of Polybus. Stung by the taunt, he with difficulty restrained himself that day; on the morrow he presents himself before father and mother, tells them what has happened, and wishes to learn the truth. These are incensed at the author of the taunt, but fail to satisfy Ædipus's doubts. The reproach still rankles in his thoughts, and will not let him rest: at length, without the knowledge of his parents, he sets off for Delphi, to obtain satisfaction from Apollo; but the god, instead of answering his question, announces to him as his destiny, that he shall wed his own mother, and beget a race hideous to mankind, and be the slayer of his own father, comp. 994 ff. Having received this oracle, he resolves, hard as it may be to him, never again to see his parents (999), but to turn his back for ever upon his Corinthian home, so to escape from the doom predicted by Apollo; for that he is truly the son of the affectionate fosterers of his infancy, he thinks he can no longer doubt. Alone he wanders, unknowing whither, through Phocis. At this same time (114 ff.) it chanced that Laius was on his way from Thebes to Apollo's oracle at Delphi, we know not upon what errand. At the point where the high road from Delphi and from Daulia (733 f.) meet in a narrow gorge (*σχιωνή δόδος*), the wanderer is met by an old man riding in a chariot, with a herald as driver. Both with violence attempt to force him out of the way. Incensed at this outrage, he aims a blow at the driver, and would then quietly pursue his way. The old man, however, watches his opportunity, and at the moment when Ædipus is in the act of passing the chariot, with his double goad deals him a blow right on the middle of his head. Upon this Ædipus, with his walking staff, so assaults him that he falls backward from the chariot and is killed. In the heat of his rage, Ædipus slays the other attendants also. (So at least he believes; but one of them escapes, and to save himself from the reproach of a cowardly flight, on his arrival in Thebes relates that a band of robbers had fallen upon the party, 122 f. This falsehood was equally indispensable for the poet, in order that Ædipus might not be allowed to come too soon upon the right track; so likewise was the representation that only one escaped, whose account of the matter could not be contradicted by other witnesses.)

Proceeding leisurely on his way, Ædipus arrives in the neighbourhood of Thebes a short time after the attendant has brought the intelligence of Laius's violent death. Here, at that precise time, the Sphinx had her lair, a monster who seizing on every one who passed that way, propounded her enigma, and if they could not solve it, hurled them headlong from the rock, thereby decimating the city. (For what cause this chastisement was sent upon Thebes, Sophocles does not say: it is enough for the poet, that she has her place in the story: accordingly she forms without further motive a link in the chain of the hero's misfortunes.) Her enigma is couched by an unknown poet according to Aesclepiades *ἐν τοῖς τραγῳδογραφῆταις*, Athen. X. 456 a, in the following verses:

* ἔστι δίκων ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ τέτραπον, αὐτὰ μία φωνή,
καὶ τρίκων· ἀλλάσσει δὲ φωνὴν μόνον ὅσ' ἐπὶ γαίῃ
ἔρυσσά κινεῖται ἀνά τ' αἰθέρα καὶ κατὰ πόντον.
ἀλλ' ὅπταν πλείστοισιν ἐριδόμενον ποσὶ βαίνει,
ἔνθα τάχος γυίαισιν ἀφαιρότατον κίλει αὐτοῦ.

Œdipus also passes by the mountain of the Sphinx, a stranger, and not as yet apprised by the Thebans concerning her proceedings: yet he intrepidly tries his fortune, and solves the Enigma of Man. This λύσις also has been put in verse:

Κλῦθι καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλονσα, κακόπτερε Μοῦσα θανόντων,
φωνῆς ἡμετέρας σὸν φίλος ἀμπλακίης·
ἄνθρωπον κατίλιξας, δεξιέρι γαίαν ἰφέρει,
πρῶτον ἔφω τετράπους νήπιος ἐκ λαγόνων.
γηραλῆος δὲ πέλων τρίτατον πόδα βέλκρον ἱρίζει,
ἀβχίνα φορτίζων, γήραι καμπτόμενος.

As a free-will gift from the grateful city, which he has rescued from destruction, he receives, together with the throne left vacant by Laius's death, the widow of the king as his wife, and now as king in Thebes passes many years in undisturbed prosperity. Jocasta bears him four children; the city, with one voice, honours him as the greatest and best of men; as the man, who, not without the special favour of the gods, overcame the Sphinx, 33 ff. But suddenly, after long years (561), the happiness which the gods awarded him is disturbed by a blight upon the fruits of the earth, and a pestilence on man and beast,—the punishment sent by Apollo because of the yet unexpiated guilt of the old murder. In his vigilant care for the city, Œdipus has sent the man who stands next to himself and to the throne, his wife's brother Creon, with whom he has ever lived in unalloyed mutual friendship, 563 ff., to Delphi, for the purpose of invoking, in this trying emergency likewise, the aid of the Pythian god. At this point begins the action of the tragedy.

Prologue 1—160. The distress having risen to the highest point, the whole population, not as yet acquainted with the measures taken by the king, has formed suppliant processions to the sanctuaries of the gods. Those who are the most in need of help, grey-headed old priests, young children, and chosen youths, are seen at the opening of the play in solemn stillness grouped before the palace on the Cadmeia, depositing their boughs upon the altars of the gods. Then Œdipus, as a father, comes forth among his children, to inform himself of the purpose of this assembly, and to express his readiness to aid them to the utmost of his power. The priest of Zeus, whose age and dignity call him to be spokesman, depicts the general distress as the cause of their thus betaking themselves to him, the approved deliverer, who owes it to himself to be still the saviour of the state. Deeply moved, Œdipus replies to this confiding and honourable address, that without waiting for any exhortation from others, he has of his own accord taken thought for all that can be done for the deliverance of his people from a calamity, which indeed presses upon him above all others. Creon has been commissioned to Delphi,