



Theban Plays

Sophocles

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"Only the gods have ageless and deathless life." The legends surrounding Oedipus of Thebes and his ill-starred offspring provided a rich vein for the Greek tragic dramatists. Sophocles (496 - 406 BC) returned to this source several times, and it inspired his three greatest plays, which are contained in this volume.

"Antigone" (442 - 441) is the tragedy of a woman ruled by conscience, who obeys unwritten law when it clashes with human law. "King Oedipus" (c. 425) is the story of a ruler brought down by his own oath, unknowingly in conflict with himself. "Oedipus at Colonus", written late in Sophocles' life, is a fitting and profound conclusion, telling of the passing of the aged and self-blinded king. All Sophocles' heroes and heroines are larger than life, so that they portray the human condition in panoramic and vivid fashion. These three plays are proof of the timeless greatness of Greek tragedy.

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