WOMAN'S THIRD FACE: A PSYCHO/SOCIAL RECONSIDERATION OF SOPHOCLES' *ANTIGONE*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The heroine of Sophocles' *Antigone* has been evaluated over the years almost exclusively in terms of her conflict with Creon, which is usually taken to represent a more universal opposition between the interests and values of the *polis* and those of the family or kinship group in fifth-century Athens. This approach has yielded numerous excellent studies that have significantly furthered our understanding of the often differing interests of these two groups in Sophocles' day and the playwright's concern with them. But to view Antigone exclusively in terms of this social conflict is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. In the first place, it tends to reproduce the narrow official viewpoint of the male *polis*, to whom Antigone's contempt for the decree of Creon would have been most important and most threatening. Moreover, the positive results of evaluating the emotional dynamics within the family of Oedipus itself, i.e., of a less civic and more personal approach toward Antigone, her siblings, and her uncle, are largely foregone by such criticism, despite what seems to me to be an additional, universal concern of Sophoclean drama with exploring family relationships from the perspectives of both male and female characters.[1] In addition, although definition of Antigone's kinship group

1 Exceptions to this generalization are Green 1979, whose focus on the Oedipus complex presupposes an emphasis on the family; Simon 1988, whose remarks do not address *Antigone* specifically; Hamilton 1991, who correctly views the family as integral to the

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and its relationship to the state must ground any accurate interpretation of the play, it fails on its own both to explain the drama's emotional and tragic power and to account for a troublesome group of apparent inconsistencies between the perceived "kinship" ethics of Antigone and some of her behavior. While Antigone's loyal commitment to *res familiaris*, as opposed to *res publica*, is generally acknowledged to have been the foundation of the unwritten law she cites to justify Polynices' burial, such loyalty is difficult to reconcile with three other prominent moments in the play when her treatment of kin falls rather short of expectations.

The first and most incriminating instance in the eyes of most critics is Antigone's rapid denunciation, at lines 69ff.[2] and again at 536ff., of her sister Ismene, who cannot bring herself to help bury Polynices in defiance of Creon's edict.[3] When Ismene explains her reasons, Antigone does not attempt to argue with or persuade her sister, but rejects her immediately and permanently (69–70).[4] She torments Ismene, who has just promised to keep Antigone's plans secret, by insisting she broadcast her actions to everyone (86–87). When her crime is discovered by Creon, she condemns her sister's inaction with the old words vs. deeds dichotomy (543). The heroine's adamant devotion to Polynices does not seem to extend to Ismene, despite the fact that Ismene is indisputably a *bona fide* kin group member. Male kin are arguably more "valuable" than female in Greek society, since female kin join other families upon their marriage; yet Antigone does not seem to subscribe to this view at the opening of the play and, in any case, it fails to account for her abrupt reversal of feeling.

In addition, it is difficult to account for Antigone's utter lack of regard for Haemon, Creon's son and her own fiancé, whose devotion to his

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fifth-century *polis*, but whose discussion of it remains theoretical; and Sorum 1982, whose remarks regarding Sophocles' concern with the shift of women's loyalties in marriage are further developed for Euripides by Seaford 1990.

2 All citations of the plays of Sophocles, except where noted, are from the Oxford edition of Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990a. Abbreviations of classical works conform to LSJ.

3 Although Jebb 1900.xxix denies that a contradiction exists ("The sternness is only that of truth; the hardness is only that of reality . . . the answer is found in Antigone's wish to save Ismene's life"), most critics perceive an inconsistency which calls for resolution. See Blundell 1989.111–15 (where Antigone's loyalty lies with friends vs. enemies, rather than kin); Brown 1987.7; and Else 1976.34–35 (where Antigone's behavior is symptomatic of her hereditary madness).

4 Despite the obvious affection with which the play opens (Ὦ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμήνης κάρα). Contrast Electra's treatment of Chrysothemis in Sophocles' *Electra.*

bride-to-be will be tragically proven by his suicide at the drama's end. Her indifference to Haemon (without exception if we attribute, with Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990b *ad loc.*, Sommerstein 1990–93, and now Knox 1996.78–80,[5] ὦ φίλταθ' Αἷμον, ὡς ς' ἀτιμάζει πατήρ [572] to Ismene),[6] and her corresponding overvaluation of Polynices have been variously viewed as part and parcel of her excessive singularity of purpose (so Else 1976, Nussbaum 1986.64–67) or as an important element of Sophocles' portrait of Antigone as the male-threatening "bad female" (so Sourvinou-Inwood 1990.17–21); otherwise it has been largely ignored. The very fact that one or the other sister speaks the line indicates that an expression of affection or concern for Haemon by a female character in the play would not have been deemed inappropriate.

Finally, Antigone poses a long-famous dilemma for critics in lines 905–12 by announcing that she would not have buried a husband or a child under the same circumstances, since they are replaceable with a new marriage and new children, while Polynices, her brother by dead parents, is not. Most critics have been forced a) to admit that Antigone virtually abandons her advocacy of the unwritten law that family members should be buried, b) to redefine that law according to her statement, c) to posit that she is irrational, either by nature or as the result of the stress of events, or d) to throw out the lines.[7]

II. APPROACH

Clearly some new avenue of approach is called for that can incorporate these apparent contradictions into a reasonably consistent picture of Sophocles' heroine. Scholars now have at their disposal a more sophisticated picture of Greek kinship relations, gender attitudes, and marriage institutions than they did twenty years ago; several scholars who

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5 In this thought-provoking piece, Knox calls for a return to intentional reading, here broadly construed as "literary identity, characteristic practices and procedures, and dramatic style," to complement traditional consideration of the *Antigone*'s manuscript. According to these criteria, Sophocles rarely allows the third actor to interject a comment in the dialogue, and never without clear identification of the speaker.

6 *Contra* Jebb 1900 *ad loc.* Murnaghan 1986.206 interprets Antigone's silence about Haemon as part of her attempt to depersonalize the institution of marriage as she chooses not to fulfill her role as a woman within it.

7 Neuburg 1990.54–76 offers a thorough discussion of the issues involved and the scholarship on these lines as well as a review of the huge bibliography.

have drawn upon this new store of knowledge to reconsider Antigone's problematic last speech have located the heroine more surely within the society that viewed the play and have correctly distinguished between types and degrees of kinship relations.[8] But the other questions about Antigone's ambiguous relations with Haemon and Ismene persist.

This paper is offered in the spirit of Charles Segal's warning against the pitfalls of "conceptualizing the protagonists too simply into antithetical principles that somehow are, and dialectically must be, ultimately reconciled . . . We must avoid seeing the protagonists as one-dimensional representatives of simple oppositions . . ." (1986.137ff.). The argument below will reach beyond investigations of the familiar collision between Antigone and the law of the *polis* (i.e., Creon and his edict)[9] to consider Antigone in relation to her mythical family, the Labdacids. It proceeds from, but is not limited to, the perspective of psychoanalytic methodology, which from the sidelines of our field has long contributed a crucial dimension to our understanding of the emotional power of the myth of Oedipus, Laius, and Jocasta.[10] Sophocles' Labdacid mythology in

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8 Results have varied. Murnaghan 1986 and Neuburg1990 provide the important distinction between blood and marriage kin in Greek culture. The recent articles of Sourvinou-Inwood (1989, 1990) make the mistake of positing a blanket equivalence between the apparent intent of long-standing social institutions (e.g., Greek marriage) and the intentions and views of individuals (here Athenian males). Antigone's actions subvert marriage institutions to just the same degree that they subvert the *polis* code of civic law; it is mistaken to conclude from that, however, that all Athenian males had the same and equal interest in either of those structures.

9 Moving away, though only for the temporary purposes of this particular analysis, from Segal's insistence (invoking Reinhardt) that "each [Antigone and Creon] is necessary to define the other" (1986.139).

10 Some critical admirers of Antigone have complained in print in recent years that ever since Freud published his clinical observations of the oedipal complex and defined it in terms of Sophocles' character, Oedipus has stolen the tragic limelight. P. DuBois 1988.74 has protested that "the psychoanalytic reading . . . sees only Oedipus." Her statement is inaccurate insofar as the methodology of dream analysis has been put to productive use by Caldwell (1987.85–100, 1989 *passim*, and 1990 *passim*) to clarify the oedipal relations that dominate the confusing and often bizarre creation narratives in the Greek theogonic tradition; Oedipus now has for company Ouranos, Cronos, and Zeus himself. It is true, however, that the emphasis upon Oedipus in tragic criticism disguises a failure to employ psychoanalytic concepts to comprehend the heroines of Greek myth. There are a number of explanations for this gap. Primary among them is the fact that Freud's modelling of the complex in females, scant in the extreme and peppered with theoretically unsatisfactory concepts like penis envy, has proven distasteful to feminist analysts and critics since Freud's day. For an excellent discussion of the history of female psychology see the

Oedipus Tyrannos, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*, taken as a whole, repeatedly explores, among other important themes, the fate of characters whose oedipal attachments[11] fail to be resolved in a normal manner. This paper will argue that Antigone is as important a part of this mythology as Oedipus himself in the Sophoclean plays: as the silent object of Oedipus' affection in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, as the staunch right arm of Oedipus in exile in *Oedipus at Colonus*, and, finally, as the spokeswoman for family burial rights in *Antigone*. Recognition of the continuing oedipal theme beneath the surface of all three plays that treat the life of Antigone as well as the lives

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introduction to Young-Bruehl 1990 (3–47); she has collected the most important of Freud's writings on female psychology and includes an annotated bibliography which covers the range of the debate since Freud's day. For a sampling of feminist literary applications of psychoanalytic theory see Feldstein and Roof 1989, which provides a series of essays, half theoretical and half literary, by some of the foremost critics in this area, including C. Cahane, J. Gallop, J. Rose, and M. Sprengnether, with references to recent works by others such as N. Chodorow, L. Irigary, J. Kristeva, and G. Spivak. Regarding *Antigone* in particular, H. Gasti 1993 explores "la psychologie féminine" as portrayed by Sophocles in *Antigone*. The restricted outlook of Steiner 1986 denies the relevance of the oedipal complex to the play: Antigone is important as the sister of Polynices, not as the daughter of Oedipus. Even Bacon's psychoanalytic treatment of the family of Oedipus (1966), from which I have adapted the title of this paper, focuses only upon the female objects of male desire (Jocasta, the mother city Thebes) and the reconciliation of male and female in *Oedipus at Colonus* (Oedipus and the Furies). Werman 1979 provides a review of psychoanalytic studies of *Antigone* by non-classicists, including Anzieu 1966, which provided Vernant 1988 with an easy target, but omitting the famous seminars of Lacan 1986 in which Antigone is construed as the ideal model of "pure desire" for the analyst; Lacan's work on Antigone is carefully discussed and evaluated by Guyomard 1992.

11 The oedipal complex in its positive form, simply put for the purposes of this paper, is the natural attraction of a child to its parent of the opposite sex and the child's subsequent hostility toward the same-sex parent, whose competition for the parent of the opposite sex is unwelcome and daunting. The crisis is ultimately resolved in adolescence when the child accepts the impossibility of marriage to the parent (i.e., accepts the universal incest taboo) and turns instead to more appropriate candidates outside the natal family, repressing the original wish. Hence Oedipus' ignorance of Jocasta's identity mythically expresses our own ignorance of the repressed wish. A failure to resolve the complex is marked by resistance to entering into marriage and other adult roles. For a discussion of the definition see Laplanche and Pontalis 1973.282–87. While the psychoanalytic bibliography on Oedipus and Jocasta is enormous, only Bacon 1966 (briefly), Anzieu 1966 (mechanically), and Caldwell 1990.368–73 extend the analysis in classical literature to include the counter-oedipal psychology of Laius, as well as the oedipal behavior of Polynices and Eteocles, both of which are crucial elements of a complete approach. Caldwell's great contribution to applied psychoanalysis and Greek myth, in addition to his thorough knowledge of the Greek texts, has been his provision of a linkage between structural and psychoanalytic methodologies (see esp. 1990.366–86).

of her male family members provides a fuller appreciation of her role in Sophocles' reworking of the myth.[12]

This study explores another generation of complex relationships, marked in this case not by incest itself, but by incestuous attachments. Before (in mythic time) Antigone sacrifices herself to honor her brother Polynices, in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, Antigone's devotion is decidedly vertical, not horizontal, and is directed toward her father, not her brothers.[13] Antigone's focus changes only with the death of Oedipus at the end of *Oedipus at Colonus*. While in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, Oedipus' expressions of feeling for both Ismene and Antigone are depicted as unusually strong, Antigone's life diverges from her sister's during the exile with Oedipus that culminates in *Oedipus at Colonus*; she emerges as his right hand in adversity and his fellow exile from Thebes. The excessive, or at least self-destructive, nature of her attachment to Polynices in *Antigone*, observed by every reader of the play,[14] corresponds precisely to the degree of her attachment to Oedipus in *Oedipus at Colonus*, and can be viewed as an emotional transference from her father to her brother.[15] Thus, when Antigone's blood relatives (Ismene, and even Creon[16]

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12 It has long been unfashionable for classicists to treat these plays as a group, since it reinforces the misunderstanding created by editions of English translations that the plays were a trilogy, when, in fact, the plays as we have them were probably produced in the order *Ant.* (440s), *OT* (probably 420s), and *OC* (401). It is not impossible that the plays were performed together as a trilogy on the occasion of the first performance of *Oedipus at Colonus*, a suggestion recently revived by Müller 1996. His arguments for (deliberate) linkage between the plays serve, at the very least, to confirm the unity of Sophocles' Labdacid myth. In any case, the order of the plays is irrelevant to my argument here; my only premise is that the same poet wrote all three plays.

13 Steiner 1986 credits the shift of popularity from *Ant.* to *OT* in the early part of this century to the eclipse of a horizontal construct of kinship relations, emphasizing sibling relations, in favor of Freud's kinship model, based on vertical relations between parents and children. Steiner is not pleased by this development and so fails to consider how the vertical structure might contribute to an understanding of Antigone in Sophocles' plays. In my view, the glorification of the purity of brother/sister relations, especially popular among romantic critics of the late nineteenth century, is a product of the Victorian idealization of pure love and chastity that the Greeks would have found very unfamiliar.

14 For a range of views see the discussions of Agard 1937, Else 1976, Goldhill 1986, and Sourvinou-Inwood 1987–88.

15 As noted by Anzieu 1966.

16 Creon conveniently defines his kinship relation with Antigone and Ismene at 485–88. They are related closely to Creon (ἀδελφῆς), but not as closely as a ὁμαιμονεστέρα, i.e., someone who worships at his household altar. The sisters, however, are ξύναιμος (488). Through his relation with Jocasta and the resulting close relation with Polynices and

and Haemon) intervene to frustrate that attachment in *Antigone* by opposing her final act of devotion to Polynices, they are fiercely resisted. Antigone's transferred oedipal attachment to Polynices gives her relationship with him priority over her kinship attachments to her sister and uncle. From this perspective, Antigone's lack of regard for Haemon is predictable, as the indifference of the excessively oedipal child to an appropriate parental replacement.[17] Ismene's and Haemon's prominent roles in the tragedy gain new importance as symbolic advocates of a normal resolution of the oedipal conflict: Ismene as the voice of reason, arguing for a more moderate if problematic approach to their brother's fate, and Haemon as the appropriate parental replacement. It is not surprising, given her unique mythological history as an exile from the *polis* and its regulations as documented in *Oedipus at Colonus*, that Antigone is unable or unwilling to make the socially-requisite transition away from her oedipal attachment through exogamic marriage. She becomes, to paraphrase the *Antigone*'s chorus, a true daughter of Oedipus.[18] I believe Sophocles spent forty years completing this portrait of Antigone as a true, and virtually final, representative of her troubled family.

Viewing Antigone's mythical history in its entirety as it appears in the extant plays of Sophocles contributes to our understanding of the emotional power of *Antigone* before its original Greek audience of the fifth century, male and female alike.[19] Such an understanding does not require us to reconstruct a homogeneous point of view for all fifth-century Athenians,

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Eteocles, Creon earns the throne on their death: γένους κατ᾽ ἀγχιστεῖα τῶν ὀλωλότων, 174, and he is doubtless the head of Antigone's *oikos*, as Sourvinou-Inwood 1990.30 argues.

17 Ironically, Vernant 1988.42 points in the direction of this approach without acknowledging its definition in Freudian theory as the appropriate resolution of the oedipal complex in his discussion of Dionysus and Eros in the *Antigone*: "Antigone has been deaf to the call to detach herself from 'her kin' and from family *philia* in order to embrace another *philia*, to accept Eros, and, in her union with a stranger, to become in her own turn a transmitter of life." Similarly, Rehm 1994.70 observes that Antigone denies "her crucial transition as a bride moving to establish a new *oikos*."

18 Antigone's oedipal behavior is only one facet of her inheritance from Oedipus; the masculinity attributed to her by Creon (484 *et al.*) is part of a savagery and bitterness of character (471, 473) that she shares with her father (379–80). The theme is introduced at the opening of the play, where, in an echo of line 2 in line 6, she metrically replaces him: τῶν ἀπ᾽ Οἰδίπου κακῶν (2), οὐκ ὄπωπ᾽ ἐγὼ κακῶν (6).

19 See J. Henderson 1991.133–47, with bibliography, for a convincing presentation of the evidence that Athenian women attended the dramatic festivals. On the likely diversity of audience responses to the play see Foley 1996.54ff. and Goldhill 1986.90ff.

but instead relies upon a key component of the culture's universally shared structure, the institution of marriage. Whether we wish to subscribe to Aristotle's general view that good drama "cleanses" the audience of its excessive emotions, or to the more technical psychoanalytic insight that myth expresses unconscious wishes of the group much as dreams do for the individual, it can be agreed that the conflicts and desires of memorable tragic characters by and large must mirror and amplify those of the audience. I will argue that Antigone's excessive attachment to Polynices in *Antigone*, and to Oedipus before him in *Oedipus at Colonus*, is an expression in myth, on a tragic/heroic scale, of a female oedipal complex we could predict would issue from the structure of classical marriage, which by means of extreme gender segregation protected the premarital virginity of its females by permitting unmarried females close associations only with males from their natal family. The nature of Antigone's devotion to Oedipus in *Oedipus at Colonus*, reinscribed and generalized in *Antigone* to extend to all her dead relatives but especially Polynices, represents on a heroic scale the tensions raised by Greek women's ambivalent feelings of attachment to their male natal family members, tensions which must have been familiar to all women of Sophocles' era, and to the males with whom they shared their lives.

III. *OEDIPUS TYRANNOS*

Oedipus Tyrannos ends with a poignant scene during which Oedipus returns to the stage after his self-blinding to express his fears for his young daughters, whose lives he knew would be forever defined by the events just viewed by the audience. While some of his concerns are expressed to Creon and the chorus, most are voiced to the girls themselves, who are led onstage for this purpose.[20] The scene comes as a surprise to many.[21] Its dramatic significance, particularly for the character of Antigone, is explored below.

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20 Bringing small children onstage was an uncommon device in Sophoclean tragedy; other than the daughters of Oedipus there is only Eurysaces in *Ajax*. Euripides is a different matter: see Sifakis 1979.67–68 and n. 4 for a complete list.

21 To Dawe 1982.22, though he observes that Oedipus' present concern for his daughters neatly mirrors his concern for the city's children at the play's opening; for Kamerbeek 1978.23 it only provides "a nuance of personal tenderness to the generally grim pathos of the ending."

Oedipus' relationship with Ismene and Antigone is the focus of the scene, which is unusual by the standards both of tragic convention and the customs of Sophocles' fifth-century audience. In his first appeal to Creon to take pity on his daughters, Oedipus argues that they had had an unusually close relationship, so close that he and they always took their meals together: αἷν οὔποθ' †ἡμὴ† χωρὶc ἐcτάθη βορᾶc / τράπεζ' ἄνευ τοῦδ' ἀνδρόc, ἀλλ' ὅcων ἐγὼ / ψαύοιμι, πάντων τώδ' ἀεὶ μετειχέτην ("for whom their table of food never stood apart without their father, but they always had a share of whatever I touched," 1463–65).[22] Our sources on family life in classical Athens overwhelmingly confirm that adult male heads of households did not normally share meals with their children or wives, but ate their meals separately in the *andron*. Golden 1990.36–38 provides numerous references to this arrangement in the fourth century, including, in particular, Socrates' recommendation of joint family dinners in his improvements of the *polis* at *Republic* 2.372B, as well as the exceptions which prove the rule, like Theophrastus' Obsequious Man, who invites his host's children to have dinner with the men (*Characters* 5.5). The other rare examples of children present in the *andron* refer in any case to male children, who are only introduced after the meal for entertainment. The presence of female children at a meal including wine would be considered not merely unusual but unseemly, since respectable Greek women did not drink wine. Only once in tragedy does a female appear in this masculine context, when the chorus in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 243–45 recalls Iphigenia's sweet singing among her father's guests. Golden suggests that this scene, as well as the claim of Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, may reflect later ideas about what family practices had been in the "heroic age" (1990.194, n. 55), as the case of Nausicaa and her mother within the idealized Phaeacian society of the *Odyssey* clearly does. It is apparent in the Aeschylus passage, however, that the chorus is only referring to the performance of Agamemnon's daughter for guests on special occasions, a role played occasionally by male children of the fifth and fourth century. In any case, the daughters of Oedipus are not providing entertainment within

22 I suspect the "curious expression" of these lines (Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990b *ad loc*. and Kamerbeek 1978 *ad loc*.) may be caused by Oedipus' attempt to convey in some formal way his daughters' pollution (by the sharing of meals) as well as their intimacy with him. See Parker 1983.318, to whom, however, the sharing of meals is unimportant; in his view, the pollution is hereditary. But Oedipus' unwillingness to allow himself even to touch Theseus in *OC* 1130–35 suggests otherwise.

a festive setting on the Homeric model in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, but are said to have taken part in a *habitual* sharing of meals with their father, which Oedipus cites as evidence of the uniquely close relationship between them. There is no question that this behavior would have been considered unusual even for Greeks of the heroic period by a fifth-century audience.

Oedipus' demonstration to Creon and the chorus of his unusual relationship with his daughters turns out to be unnecessary. Creon acknowledges Oedipus' feelings for his daughters by bringing the girls onstage even before Oedipus has asked for them, γνοὺς τὴν παροῦσαν τέρψιν ἥ σ' εἶχεν πάλαι ("understanding that this present pleasure is one which you have long enjoyed," 1477). Oedipus is beside himself with joy as they are produced (1468–75), calling the girls his "dear ones" at 1472 (τοῖν μοι φίλοιν) and "dearest of my children" at 1474 (τὰ φίλτατ' ἐκγόνοιν ἐμοῖν).[23] Throughout their scene together the concern of Oedipus for the girls is quite naturally apparent: he embraces them, despite his polluted state, weeps for them, and ends by again begging Creon to take care of them. It should also be noted that Oedipus' attachment to his daughters contrasts sharply with his open lack of concern for his sons, for obvious cultural reasons: παίδων δὲ τῶν μὲν ἀρσένων μή μοι, Κρέον, / προσθῇ μέριμναν· ἄνδρες εἰσίν, ὥστε μὴ / σπάνιν ποτὲ σχεῖν, ἔνθ' ἂν ὦσι, τοῦ βίου ("Now do not take upon yourself the care of my sons, Creon. For they are men, so that wherever they are they will not want for livelihood," 1459–61).

The complete absence elsewhere in extant Greek tragedy of scenes portraying such father/daughter affection[24] suggests that Oedipus' display of sentiment would not have been perceived as normal even on the

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23 Φίλος and its cognates have broad usage in Sophocles' plays; on *Ant.* see esp. Alaux 1992 *passim*, Blundell 1989.106–48, Goldhill 1986.79–106. Use of the adjective in the superlative degree has been neatly evaluated by Sommerstein 1990–93. The term is typically addressed to kin (natal and marital) in Sophocles and is therefore not necessarily an erotic term. It does, however, assume some sort of affection (see Blundell 1989.41–46 and note 47 below).

24 The only possible exception is the dialogue between Agamemnon and Iphigenia in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* 1211–75, produced in 405 B.C.E. Although Iphigenia's display of feeling for her father is touching, Agamemnon's reply is largely a rationalization of her sacrifice; his words, φιλῶ τ' ἐμαυτοῦ τέκνα, are not enough for me to conclude, with Green's intriguing study of Euripides' and Racine's Iphigenias (1979), that "the meeting between Iphigenia and Agamemnon . . . shows the tender relations between father and daughter" (1979.138). In fact, the entire play is an examination of Agamemnon's overvaluation of political relations to the detriment of family relations.

anachronistic tragic stage. This is not to deny that close relationships could exist between fathers and daughters in classical Athens, despite what we know was an extensive practice of female infanticide and a general devaluation of female children.[25] It is the open expression of that closeness that is striking and unusual.[26]

The abnormality of Oedipus' behavior is more apparent when set in context among the confused natal relationships for which his family was so famous. Adherence to family roles (father, mother, daughter, son) underlies, and is necessary to, the enforcement of a taboo against incest and the orderly functioning of Greek (and any) society; *Oedipus Tyrannos* is an eloquent demonstration of the importance of this prohibition in Greek culture. Overvaluation of one parent is as destructive to the family and the city as excessive hostility toward the other; a balance must be sought or role definitions become skewed, as they were by the misfortunes of Laius, Oedipus, and Jocasta. The resulting confusion of roles (mother/wife, son/husband, father/rival) are a regular source of horror to Sophocles' characters in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, who express it in precisely these terms. For example, the chorus describes Jocasta as the μέγαc λιμὴν . . . παιδὶ καὶ πατρὶ, "the great harbor for father and son," at 1208–10, and as αἱ πατρῷ-αι . . . ἄλοκεc, the "paternal furrows" (1211–12) that endured her son in silence. The messenger at 1249–50 reports that Jocasta curses the bed where she ἐξ ἀνδρὸc ἄνδρα καὶ τέκν' ἐκ τέκνων τέκοι, "bore a husband from a husband and children from children." Oedipus (again via the messenger) responds at 1256–57: γυναῖκά τ' οὐ γυναῖκα, μητρῴαν δ' ὅπου / κίχοι διπλῆν ἄρουραν οὗ τε καὶ τέκνων, "a wife not a wife, my mother's twice-sowed field from which both I and my children came." At the end of the play, this conflation of roles extends into the next generation. It is expressed by the ambivalence of Oedipus' opening address to Ismene and Antigone, who are now explicitly included in the confusion as both Oedipus' daughters and sisters. While he summons them ὦ τέκνα at 1480,

25 Golden's discussion (1990.82–97) is extremely valuable for its handling of the emotional content of this parent-child relationship in classical Athens.

26 Dover 1972.127 observes that *Wasps* 607–09 is the only passage in comedy "which dares to hint at the enjoyment of incestuous contacts" between Philocleon and his daughter. Although Henderson 1988.1249–64 cautions us not to impose our own definitions of what constitutes sexual behavior on fifth-century Athens, he agrees with Dover that the *Wasps* passage was intended to be shocking. Of course the *Wasps* goes much further than anything portrayed in *OT*.

he calls them into his "brother's hands" at 1481 (ὡς τὰς ἀδελφὰς τάσδε τὰς ἐμὰς χέρας),[27] which he further condemns, as if separate agents, as the mutilators of the eyes of their "begetting father" (τοῦ φυτουργοῦ πατρὸς, 1482). ὦ τέκν' and πατὴρ are repeated in 1484 and 1485. Kamerbeek 1978 rightly remarks *ad loc.* that φυτουργοῦ sharply emphasizes the girls' incestuous parentage. Family roles have become precarious and changeable by the end of *Oedipus Tyrannos* and raise disturbing questions about the nature of Oedipus' relationship with his daughters.[28]

The atypical closeness of the father/daughter relationship portrayed in this scene suggests that a new oedipal triangle is taking shape at the end of *Oedipus Tyrannos*, in which Oedipus' focus has subtly shifted from Jocasta, now dead, to Ismene and Antigone. Various details in Sophocles' version of the myth reinforce the notion of a shift of affection away from Jocasta. In contrast to other traditions,[29] the events of *Oedipus Tyrannos* both reveal Oedipus' incestuous relationship with Jocasta and present him as the implicit cause of her death: Jocasta's suicide is the direct result of the insistent researches of Oedipus, which he continues despite her many protests (see especially 1056–72). Sophocles provides an even more interesting twist if at 1255 the messenger is reporting that Oedipus was intent upon killing Jocasta when he found her dead: φοιτᾷ γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἔγχος ἐξαιτῶν πορεῖν ("For he paced back and forth, asking us to get him a sword"). Dawe 1982 *ad loc.* concludes that the sword must be intended for Jocasta, especially in light of Oedipus' vitriolic condemnation of Jocasta's womb immediately following at 1256–57. The messenger claims that some god must have helped Oedipus, since none of the men did (1258–59); Oedipus managed to obtain a sword and break down the door to Jocasta's

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27 Oedipus will again refer to them as sisters at *OC* 535: κοιναί γε πατρὸς ἀδελφεαί. The same horror at the confusion of family names caused by incest is expressed at *Ant.* 53: ἔπειτα μήτηρ καὶ γυνή, διπλοῦν ἔπος.

28 Horror at the ambiguity of the position occupied by Antigone and Ismene as a result of the incest is discussed in precisely the same terms in *OC*, written some 25 years later. Once the chorus of Colonians delicately establishes the truth about Oedipus and Jocasta (511–30) the discussion moves immediately to its implications for his daughters. The chorus' hesitancy even to acknowledge the girls' dual status is apparent in 530ff., culminating in 535–36: *OI* - κοιναί γε πατρὸς ἀδελφεαί· / *XO* - ἰώ.

29 In Euripides' contemporary *Ph.*, Jocasta lives on after Oedipus' self-blinding and kills herself over the deaths of her sons; only then do Oedipus and Antigone go into exile. In *Odyssey* 11 Jocasta (here Epicasta) commits suicide while Oedipus continues to rule in Thebes; in *Iliad* 23 Oedipus is buried at Thebes.

room, but she had already hanged herself (1260–64). The self-blinding is an afterthought, accomplished with the brooches on Jocasta's dress (1268–74).

Sophocles' motivation for incorporating such hostility toward Jocasta in *Oedipus Tyrannos* is rarely discussed and difficult to account for. The oedipal triangle comprised of Oedipus, Laius, and Jocasta, in which the fantasies of the oedipal son are primary, forms the psychological centerpiece of *Oedipus Tyrannos*, and Oedipus' late hostility toward his mother seems to contradict it.[30] I would suggest that Oedipus' behavior at the end of the play signals a shift to a new triangle comprised of Oedipus, Jocasta, and their daughters, in which the silent daughters' oedipal outlook is represented. In an oedipal triangle, the child's attraction to the opposite-sex parent is always complemented by some degree of hostility toward the same-sex parent, who, in fantasy, is perceived as a rival to be eliminated. From the perspective of an oedipal daughter, Oedipus has played a major role at the end of *Oedipus Tyrannos* in removing the rival standing between the daughters and their father.[31]

Oedipus' closing remarks will also eliminate any future rivals for his daughters' affections, their potential suitors, by denying Antigone's and Ismene's marriageability. One of the most common expressions in Greek myth of an incestuous structure involving fathers and daughters is a paternal prohibition of the daughter's marriage. Either the daughter is placed under lock and key, as in the case of Danaë, or suitors are required to perform an "impossible task" to win her, usually an activity at which the father excels and cannot be bettered.[32] Oedipus' strenuous insistence upon

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30 Caldwell 1990.369 rightly observes that the Labdacid myth as a whole reproduces the perspective of the males of each generation for whom the female is the desired object and the son/father the unwelcome rival. I believe, however, that this formula does not do justice to Sophocles' treatment, particularly of Antigone in both *OC* and *Ant.*

31 An argument could be made that the extreme youth of Antigone and Ismene in *OT* (e.g., 1508: τηλικάσδ' ὁρῶν and 1511: εἰ μὲν εἰχέτην ἤδη φρένας, "if you already had wisdom") corresponds to the age of the first repression of oedipal wishes in children (approx. four to six years of age), when fantasies of this kind are especially vivid. In any case, it is not too much to acknowledge the girls' psychological vulnerability under the circumstances, and to recognize that the actions, emotions, and words of Oedipus in the play would dovetail structurally with the oedipal inclinations of girls of that age.

32 See Caldwell 1990.354: " For example, to win Iole Heracles must win an archery contest against her father Eurytus, his own archery teacher . . .; to win the Golden Fleece and Medea, Jason must perform the labors . . . which Medea's father Aeetes himself can accomplish in a single day . . . ; to win Hippodamia, Pelops must win a chariot race against her father Oenomaus, whose magical horses were a gift from the god Ares . . ."

the impossibility of his daughters' marriages forms a protest of this type. In the course of defining what will be for them τὰ πικρὰ τοῦ λοιποῦ βίου, "the bitterness of the rest of their lives" (1487), which includes the inability to participate in social activities (1491), Oedipus exclaims at 1493–95: τίς οὗτος ἔσται, τίς παραρρίψει, τέκνα, / τοιαῦτ' ὀνείδη λαμβάνειν, ἃ †τοῖς ἐμοῖς† / γονεῦσιν ἔσται σφῷν θ' ὁμοῦ δηλήματα ("Who will risk adopting such shame, children, which will be a disaster for my children and for them as well?"). He continues at 1500–02: κᾆτα τίς γαμεῖ; / οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδείς, ὦ τέκν', ἀλλὰ δηλαδὴ / χέρσους φθαρῆναι κἀγάμους ὑμᾶς χρέων ("Who then will marry you? There is no one who will, children; it is clear that you will waste away, childless and unmarried").

It cannot be argued that Oedipus is merely facing the naked truth in these lines, for Sophocles' own plays, as well as many alternate traditions, would prove him wrong. Antigone will be engaged to Haemon to the shame of no one and with the apparent blessing, however temporary, of Creon in *Antigone*; in Euripides' *Phoenissae* 757–60, Eteocles, as Antigone's guardian, has betrothed her to Haemon, but charges Creon to bring it off in the event of his death. In Euripides' *Antigone*, Antigone and Haemon are apparently not only married, but produce a child. The shame, therefore, could not have been so prohibitive as to render the girls' marriage logically impossible, despite the close contact of Oedipus and his daughters.[33] The motivation for Oedipus' words is possessiveness, and it combines with his excessive display of fatherly affection to create an ominously incestuous atmosphere at the end of *Oedipus Tyrannos*.

IV. *OEDIPUS AT COLONUS*

The tradition preserved in *Oedipus at Colonus*, which focuses upon the end of Oedipus' exile but has a great deal to say about how

33 Although Parker 1983.204–05 argues that pollution could jeopardize the marriage of daughters, he acknowledges that "it was open to any sacrificial community to make its own decision as to who was acceptable as a member." Peisistratos' unwillingness to father children on an Alcmeonid wife created a political crisis; Parker concludes, "In this case, it seems that pollution had . . . become instead an inherited disgrace . . . which enemies would denounce and friends ignore" (1983.17). An excellent example from the fifth century is Pericles himself, about whom Parker observes, "If it was through hostility to tyrants that the Alcmaeonids incurred pollution, it was surely their carefully nurtured reputation for the same quality that helped to cleanse it" (1983.206).

Antigone spent her adolescence,[34] provides a crucial bridge for understanding how Sophocles envisioned the development of Antigone's character between her childhood, briefly mentioned in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, and the realization of her mature character in *Antigone*. My argument presupposes that the general idea, though perhaps not the details, of Antigone's exile with Oedipus lay behind Sophocles' characterization of the heroine in *Antigone* many years before *Oedipus at Colonus* was composed. Such an approach is impossible to justify conclusively, for as Jebb observes (1900 *ad* line 50), no exile from Thebes by either party is mentioned in *Antigone.* Nevertheless, the play does not preclude an exile either; on the contrary, a long absence from the *polis* and its regulations would go a long way toward explaining Antigone's behavior in *Antigone*.[35] Jebb 1900 *ad* line 50 argues "here Soph. follows the outline of the epic version, acc. to which Oed. died at Thebes," but, in fact, Ismene merely says that after his self-blinding her father ἀπεχθὴς δυσκλεής τ' ἀπώλετο, "perished hated and infamous." No location or circumstances are provided, and the dismal adjectives actually argue against Sophocles' drawing upon an epic Oedipus who continued to rule at Thebes, presumably unhated and rather famous. Similarly, when at 900–02 Antigone refers to her burial of her parents αὐτόχειρ, "with her own hands," her testimony only contradicts the *detail* of Oedipus' mystical passage from this world to the next in *Oedipus at Colonus*. It neither states nor implies that Oedipus died at Thebes (so Jebb 1900 *ad loc.*), nor insists that he remained at Thebes after his blinding; it does, however, demonstrate that Antigone was with both of her parents at their deaths. A tradition in which Oedipus travelled into exile is certainly alluded to in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, at the conclusion of which Oedipus repeatedly looks forward to his banishment from the city,[36] and this same tradition is quite likely to have

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34 "Adolescence" here denotes the age between the onset of puberty and full physical maturity. The term preferable to some classicists, παρθένος, is not an age but a marital category; Antigone is of course unmarried at this point, but the fact that she is a παρθένος of marriageable age is key to my interpretation, so I retain "adolescent" to describe her.

35 The *Ph.*, produced at about the same time as *OC*, includes the father/daughter exile in its final scene, which is, however, notoriously suspect. Representative discussions of the passage's authenticity include Craik 1988, Erbse 1966.1–34, Fraenkel 1963, Mastronarde 1994, Müller-Goldingen 1985, and v. d. Valk 1985.19ff. To my knowledge only Alaux 1992, in his study of φιλία, regards as a continuous whole the myths of both *OC* and *Antigone*.

36 Oedipus repeatedly requests his own exile at the end of *OT*, first at 1340–46 and then more specifically at 1410, 1436–37, 1449–54, and finally 1518. Oedipus' entire final scene with his daughters and his appeals to Creon to care for them presume an imminent departure

been familiar to Athenians well before the production of *Antigone* from the cult of Oedipus at Colonus.[37] The inconclusiveness of the evidence against the existence of an exile tradition before *Antigone*, and the compatibility of such an exile with her character in the play, leads me to regard the issue as an open one, as Sophocles himself seemed to.

In *Oedipus at Colonus*, Antigone is portrayed travelling with Oedipus in exile. While Antigone's attachment to Oedipus is, from the perspective of the father and the natal family, laudable (the devotion of a daughter to her father), it is certainly undesirable from the perspective of the *polis*, where the female's role is to marry into another family and bear children, thereby cementing inter-familial bonds. *Oedipus at Colonus* locates Antigone's exile from the city and its normalizing influences at a crucial transitional moment for a Greek woman, between childhood and marriage during adolescence. The length and severity of her absence prevent her from truly reaching maturity as defined by the *polis*: by replacing her father with a husband in exogamic marriage. When, at the end of *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus dies, Antigone rapidly transfers her emotional attachment from her father, whose fate is now sealed, to her brothers; rather than turning outside the family to be married and reproduce, as her age and society mandate, she instead transfers her devotion to her remaining natal male relatives. Antigone continues the Labdacid pattern of forbidden endogamic relationships that Oedipus established with his marriage to Jocasta, and that he extended after her death to his daughters at the end of *Oedipus Tyrannos*.

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into exile. See Kamerbeek 1978.3–4. Such a tradition could be in circulation as early as Pindar's parable at *Pyth.* 4.263–69 (462–61 B.C.E.), if Edmunds' interpretation (1981.224–25, n. 14) is correct. The fragment of Stesichorus' *Thebaid* (222A in Campbell 1991) begins to be legible only after the death of Oedipus has taken place, and Jocasta makes no reference to the manner or location of his death.

37 The cult of Oedipus at Colonus, whose hero is the wandering suppliant Oedipus in exile, is dated either to the late sixth or late fifth century (see Edmunds 1981.232, n. 44), and presumably the tradition of the hero's wandering to Attica preceded cult practice. Edmunds 1981 fully discusses the difficult evidence regarding Oedipus' hero cults all over Greece and concludes that the cult of Oedipus developed independently of epic, though not necessarily earlier. I am indebted to him for directing me to a krater at the Bowdoin College Museum of 430 B.C.E., illustrated in Herbert 1964, no. 196, that depicts a sphinx and Oedipus on one side; on the other "a draped old man with a staff stands before a draped woman, who holds out a phiale to him." It is very tempting to think that Antigone's exile with Oedipus is the subject of this scene.

The merging of Antigone's life with Oedipus' in *Oedipus at Colonus* is accompanied by a marked differentiation of her fate from Ismene's. The relationships of Antigone and Ismene to Oedipus, indistinguishable in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, undergo dramatic change in *Oedipus at Colonus*; although both girls remain devoted to their father, the means they choose to express their devotion are different and significant. Antigone's dreary condition of exile and sacrifice with Oedipus is sharply contrasted with Ismene's life in the city, where Ismene acts as her father's eyes and ears but apparently leads a normal life. As in *Antigone*, Ismene represents the rule which proves Antigone the exception; Ismene is the "normal" Greek girl living within the limits and laws of the *polis*, while Antigone is the abnormal, extra-political entity.[38] The same contrast of perspectives between the sisters that opens *Antigone* is found in *Oedipus at Colonus*, where Antigone's extreme marginality with respect to the *polis* and the normative family, which marks so much of her behavior in *Antigone*, is provided with an origin during the exile of Oedipus.

According to Sophocles' version of the wanderings of Oedipus and Antigone, their exile is a lengthy one. Early in the play Oedipus attributes part of his ability to endure exile to the teachings of its long duration, cτέργειν . . . χρόνοc . . . μακρὸc διδάcκει (7–8). Antigone, too, suggests that a long period of time has passed when she insists that she has learned through the course of time what her father needs: χρόνου μὲν οὕνεκ' οὐ μαθεῖν με δεῖ τόδε (22). Antigone is therefore well out of childhood. Oedipus defines the time period more precisely in his denunciation of his sons and praise of his daughters at 345–52; Antigone has accompanied him "since she left childhood and reached maturity" (ἣ μὲν ἐξ ὅτου νέαc / τροφῆc ἔληξε καὶ κατίcχυcεν δέμαc, 345–46). Their exile has not consisted of travel from home to home or even city to city, but has largely been spent in the wild; again Oedipus paints a dreary portrait, at 348–52, of hunger and exposure to the elements. Antigone seems, therefore, to have spent her entire adolescence with her father in isolation from the city and its influences.

Meanwhile Ismene has remained in the city; her appearance in the play, as in *Antigone*, increases the impact of Antigone's terrible marginality. Though Ismene's devotion to Oedipus is proven by her supportive

38 A similar polarization of two sisters enhances the conflict between Chrysothemis and Electra in Sophocles' *Electra.*

appearance in this play, it is limited in much the same way that her devotion to Polynices will be in *Antigone*, by her association with the *polis*. It is clear, for example, that she has not been in regular contact with the exiles. Ismene twice remarks upon the difficulty she has had trying to locate them (328, 361–64, this second a *recusatio* of her unwillingness to recall her difficulties). Oedipus only mentions one previous visit, if we interpret the aorist ἐξίκου strictly (353), when Ismene came to report unspecified oracles to her father (353–56). The passage of time since their last meeting may also be indicated by the difficulty Antigone has recognizing her sister (ἆρ᾽ ἔcτιν; ἆρ᾽ οὐκ ἔcτιν; ἦ γνώμη πλανᾷ; / καὶ φημὶ κἀπόφημι κοὐκ ἔχω τί φῶ, "Is it, or isn't it? Does my judgment deceive me? I both say it is and it isn't and yet I don't know what to say," 316–17). This impression is also reinforced by Ismene's reaction to her father's appearance in line 327, if we read δύcμορφ᾽ with Lloyd-Jones and Wilson, a term which should indicate that the aging Oedipus has suffered since Ismene last saw him. Ismene's physical condition contrasts sharply with the degraded raggedness of Antigone and Oedipus; she is riding a Sicilian mount, Αἰτναίαc ἐπὶ / πώλου (312–13), which seems to signify a quality animal,[39] and wearing a Thessalian travelling hat (314).[40] While Ismene is praised by Oedipus for her efforts on his behalf, it is apparent that Antigone has made the greater sacrifice, and she is therefore, by far, the more prominent character in the play; after her initial appearance Ismene disappears offstage to make a sacrifice and does not speak again until the final lament for Oedipus. Ismene's significance for our understanding of Antigone in the play is profound. If Antigone and Oedipus are "other" for the Athenian audience, Ismene is marked as "same" by her association with the *polis* and its values.

While the marginality of Oedipus ultimately consecrates him and confirms his heroism by the play's end, the same cannot be said for Antigone. The effect of the long exile is negative from the point of view of

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39 I agree with Platnauer's suggestion (1964) at Ar. *Peace* 73, regarding Trygaeus' flying beetle, that Αἰτναίαc indicates neither hugeness nor evokes associations with the Giants, but quite naturally refers to the fine horses bred in the area. Since the entire scene in *Peace* is a parody of Euripides' *Bellerophon*, Pegasus himself may have been compared with the Sicilian breed.

40 Neither of these accoutrements necessarily indicates wealth, although the effect would have been particularly striking if Ismene rode the horse on stage. They nonetheless represent riches in comparison with Antigone and Oedipus in exile, who have been travelling on foot, often on bare feet, and who apparently have no protective clothing, according to Oedipus (348–52).

the city as represented implicitly by Ismene and explicitly by Creon in *Oedipus at Colonus*: the normal influence of the *polis* upon her has been neutralized, an influence considered essential for the control and protection of Greek females. Oedipus himself observes that Antigone "considered a traditional way of life at home of secondary importance to the support of her father" (δεύτερ᾽ ἡγεῖται τὰ τῆς / οἴκοι διαίτης, εἰ πατὴρ τροφὴν ἔχοι, 351–52); she has instead endured countless hardships with him as a fellow beggar and guide. While her father praises her for her devotion, the city, in the form of Creon, laments her descent to such an insulting fate (τὴν ἐγὼ τάλας / οὐκ ἄν ποτ᾽ ἐς τοσοῦτον αἰκίας πεσεῖν / ἔδοξ᾽, "wretched I, who never thought she could sink to such a level of shame," 747–49). His concern may not be genuine, but his point is no less valid.

Even more interesting is Creon's explicit observation at 751–52 that Antigone's exile displaces the marriage she should already have: οὐ γάμων / ἔμπειρος, ἀλλὰ τοὐπιόντος ἁρπάσαι; without the protection of a husband or *polis*, Creon slyly argues, Antigone is vulnerable to seizure and, we may presume, rape.[41] His statement casts Antigone's exile in explicitly oedipal terms: her exile from the city is exile from marriage, for which she has substituted a life devoted to her father. As Oedipus himself will say on his deathbed, τὸ γὰρ φιλεῖν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐξ ὅτου πλέον / ἢ τοῦδε τἀνδρὸς ἔσχεθ᾽, "you will never have from any man as much love as you've had from this one" (1617–18).

Sophocles supplies the background in *Oedipus at Colonus* for the affection Antigone exhibits for Polynices in *Antigone*, although not, at this point in mythic time, to the exclusion of Eteocles. Before the death of Oedipus, she is her brother's eloquent advocate, arguing in a long speech (1180–1203) that the stubborn Oedipus should meet with him νῷν, "for our sake" (1184). As his father it is not right to wrong a son, she argues, even if the son has wronged him (1189–91). She observes that Oedipus' own suffering is an evil produced by the anger of his parents (referring to Laius' original exposure of Oedipus), of which his eyes are a grisly memorial (1195–1200). Antigone wins her case and, as Oedipus calls it, her pleasure (ἡδονὴν, 1204), although Polynices' quest to win over Oedipus fails. Antigone pleads with Polynices in vain to change his plans to attack

41 The irony of this comment coming from Creon is apparent. Among the list of Antigone's sufferings in exile, which he has every reason to inflate, Oedipus does not mention the threat of seizure or rape. Creon, who is himself about to arrest her, will be her first exposure to this sort of experience.

Eteocles, both for his own sake and for Thebes' (1414–31). Her grief at his impending death is aptly expressed in a final and deeply emotional hemistichic exchange (framed by Antigone's ὦ τάλαιν' ἐγώ and δυcτάλαινά τἄρ' ἐγώ, / εἴ cου cτερηθῶ at 1438 and 1442–43).

With the death of Oedipus, it becomes clear that Antigone has not accepted the finality of Polynices' rather lame surrender to fate. After a lengthy lament for Oedipus, the chorus offers the girls refuge in Athens (1739–40). Antigone concedes that she cannot go home (ὅπωc μολούμεθ' ἐc δόμουc / οὐκ ἔχω, 1742–43) and the chorus again urges her to remain in Athens. When Theseus arrives, Antigone begs him to allow her to see the grave of her father, and he must patiently explain again why he can tell no one where Oedipus died. Antigone then immediately reverses her earlier conviction that a return to Thebes is impossible. She asks to be sent home to prevent somehow the bloodshed between her kinsmen (Θήβαc δ' ἡμᾶc / τὰc Ὠγυγίουc[42] πέμψον, ἐάν πωc / διακωλύcωμεν ἰόντα φόνον / τοῖcιν ὁμαίμοιc, "send us to Ogygian Thebes, in case we might prevent the approaching destruction of our brothers," 1769–72). The transference of her devotion from Oedipus, now dead, to her brothers is swift and decisive; the equivalence of all three men in Antigone's mind is demonstrated by the rapid shift of her emotional focus, and emphasized by her use of the term ὁμαίμοιc to refer to her brothers, a term vague enough to refer to all three men. Theseus agrees to return the sisters to Thebes as the drama ends.

V. *ANTIGONE*

Such are the outlines of Antigone's early life according to the tradition established by the plays of Sophocles. Antigone's Sophoclean biography is remarkably consistent when read together with the play that bears her name, a fact that at least suggests that the playwright's interest in his heroine did not ebb after the success of *Antigone*, but that he instead took the opportunity in two later plays to develop his original character. When all three plays are considered together, the emotional significance of the famous *polis*/family dynamic so frequently observed in *Antigone* is clarified, and explanations for a number of previously inexplicable aspects

42 I diverge from the Oxford text of Lloyd-Jones and Wilson 1990a only here, capitalizing Ὠγυγίουc to stress its reference, when applied to Thebes, to the first ruler of the city, over its later adjectival meaning, "ancient." See Pausanias IX.5.1.

of the play emerge. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, Antigone's oedipal attachment to her father in exile, compounded by her ensuing isolation from the values of the *polis*, and her final transference of that affection, marked as excessive by the normative example of Ismene, to her brothers after her father's death, contextualizes the relationships of the heroine in *Antigone* with her natal relatives (her sister and her dead brother) and soon-to-be marital relatives (her fiancé and her prospective father-in-law). While on one level Antigone champions the religious rights of the family in the face of an interventionist *polis* represented by Creon and, to a lesser degree, Ismene, on another level the conflict takes place *within* the family: the drama's several important characters are related by marriage in a household headed by Creon as κύριος after the death of Oedipus. My discussion below assumes that the concern of Greek tragedy with relationships *within* the heroic family, so crucial to our understanding of all of Greek drama, also finds expression in *Antigone*, and therefore deserves as much attention as Antigone's relationship to the *polis*.

Antigone opens with a powerful restatement of the close kinship and love that binds the daughters of Oedipus. Antigone's affectionate address to Ismene occupies the entire first line of the play, and references to their kin and kinship fill the first scene (Ὦ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμήνης κάρα, 1; δυοῖν ἀδελφοῖν, 13; τὼ κασιγνήτω, 21; τὸν γοῦν ἐμόν, καὶ τὸν σόν . . . ἀδελφόν, 45–46; ὦ κασιγνήτη, 49). This bond, however, is no sooner defined than it is threatened by the radically different points of view of the sisters. As most studies of *Antigone* have observed, Antigone is a marginal character, standing outside the city and its laws (figuratively and actually in the opening scene, 18–19), while Ismene is based within it. Their conflicting reactions to Creon's edict reflect the gulf between them. When Antigone reports the decree to her sister, she exclaims, τοιαῦτά φασι τὸν ἀγαθὸν Κρέοντα σοὶ / κἀμοί, λέγω γὰρ κἀμέ, κηρύξαντ' ἔχειν ("such are the things they say the noble Creon has decreed to you and me, yes, I say, even *me*!" 31–32). Creon's attempts to control her behavior are preposterous to Antigone, but not only because they intrude into a realm properly governed by the family; the tradition of her exile would also suggest that her life has not prepared her for the constraints of civil law (the Chorus will call her αὐτόνομος, destroyed by her αὐτόγνωτος ὀργά at 821 and 875). Ismene, by contrast, dutifully instructs her sister about the νόμοι Θηβαίων: civil disobedience leads to a shameful death (59–60), women must not contend with men (61–62), and the weak must hearken to the powerful (63–64).

It is important to bear in mind, however, that this dispute was prefigured, in Sophoclean mythic time, in *Oedipus at Colonus*. Antigone's exile, according to the tradition later followed by both Sophocles and Euripides, was not motivated by a high-minded rejection of the *polis* and its laws in favor of the autonomous family, but by her devotion to her father, which I have argued is basically oedipal in nature. It is Antigone's identical tendency toward excessive devotion, this time to her brother instead of her father, that is the foundation of her conflict with Ismene in *Antigone*. Antigone follows the path of excessive oedipal devotion, this time on behalf of Polynices, while Ismene speaks with the normative voice of the family reconciled to the *polis* and its regulations.

Antigone's harsh rejection of Ismene, who is, after all, her last remaining natal kin, requires that we look beyond kinship attachment for an additional motivation for both Antigone's rage and her burial of Polynices. Ismene's arguments earn her Antigone's immediate scorn and dismissal (οὔτ᾽ ἂν κελεύcαιμ᾽ οὔτ᾽ ἄν, εἰ θέλοιc ἔτι / πράccειν, ἐμοῦ γ᾽ ἂν ἡδέωc δρῴηc μέτα, "I wouldn't order you to do it; in fact, now your help wouldn't make me happy, even if you wanted to give it," 69–70). Her contempt is apparent throughout the scene in phrases like ἀλλ᾽ ἴcθ᾽ ὁποία cοι δοκεῖ, "but be whatever you please" (71), echoed in 76–77 where she sarcastically quips, cὺ δ᾽ εἰ δοκεῖ / τὰ τῶν θεῶν ἔντιμ᾽ ἀτιμάcαc ἔχε ("but go ahead, if it pleases you to dishonor what the gods consider honorable"). Antigone regards Ismene's explanations as mere justification for cowardice (cὺ μὲν τάδ᾽ ἂν προῦχοι᾽, "so you claim," 80), and will spurn her sister's offer to keep her plans secret (84–87); when Ismene foolishly attempts to share the blame with Antigone, she will be berated at 543 for loving in word but not in deed: λόγοιc δ᾽ ἐγὼ φιλοῦcαν οὐ cτέργω φίλην, "A friend in words is not the friend that I love" (so Jebb 1900); "I do not care for a friend who shows her friendship in words" (so Brown 1987).[43] Ismene's pathetic expressions of love for Antigone (cf. 548, 566) are answered by her sister's taunts (Κρέοντ᾽ ἐρώτα. τοῦδε γὰρ cὺ κηδεμών, "ask Creon; he's the one you care about," 549). By the end of the play, Antigone will deny Ismene's very existence when she refers to herself as the λοιcθία of her family at 895 and, at 941, as the "sole remaining member of the royal family" (τὴν βαcιλειδῶν μούνην λοιπήν).

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43 On the much-discussed question of φιλία in *Antigone* see esp. Alaux 1992 with bibliography, notes 17 and 23 above, and note 47 below.

If Antigone's single-minded devotion were for her kin group, or even her natal kin group, as Murnaghan 1986 and Neuburg 1990 have argued, her treatment of Ismene is incomprehensible and inconsistent. Ismene is the last representative of Antigone's natal family, as she details for Antigone in rather bald terms at 49–57. Are we to suppose that female kin somehow did not count? By Antigone's own logic in her final scene, sisters too are irreplaceable. So Antigone's cruel rejection of Ismene belies the blanket devotion to kin usually ascribed to her. Antigone has a single object of devotion in the drama, the body and (once she proceeds to her death) the soul of Polynices; her devotion, by virtue of its very similarity to her devotion to her father in exile, is oedipal in its origin and its excessiveness. Her relationships with others, kin or otherwise, pale by comparison with it and are easily dispensable if they interfere.

Within this framework, Sophocles' introduction of Haemon, the son of Creon and Antigone's fiancé,[44] and Antigone's indifference to him not only make sense, but serve to emphasize the oedipal nature of Antigone's emotional commitment to Polynices. Antigone never once mentions Haemon, despite his devotion to her: Haemon's *eros* or desire for Antigone, though well-disguised during the first few moments of his interchange with his father, motivates his arguments on her behalf,[45] according to both the chorus (627–30) and Creon (632–33). At 751, Haemon declares that "dying she will kill another" (θανοῦc' ὀλεῖ τινα), a remark Creon interprets as a threat against himself, but which is actually a vow to commit suicide. The choral ode on the power of Eros (781–800) reiterates the chorus' suspicions about Haemon's feelings, which will be confirmed by his eventual suicide alongside Antigone in her tomb. Antigone, by contrast, will never acknowledge Haemon specifically, not even in those speeches in which she addresses her sorrow at dying unmarried. In Antigone's oedipal world Haemon is an unwelcome parental replacement; their marriage would signify the resolution of her oedipal conflict and an achievement of maturity that Antigone does not desire, even when threatened with death.[46]

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44 According to the tradition reported by Apollodorus (3.5.8) and a scholion to Euripides' *Ph.* (Schwartz 1887.256 on line 45), it was Haemon's death at the hands of the Sphinx that drove Creon to offer such a handsome reward (Jocasta and the kingship) to anyone who solved the riddle.

45 See now Erbse's arguments (1991.253–61) for the motivation of Haemon by Eros and, in particular, his discussion of von Fritz's position.

46 See note 17 above.

At the close of the play, then, Polynices and all that goes with him (his burial by Antigone, the ensuing punishment) structurally displace Antigone's marriage, and consequently Haemon himself, as we might expect in an oedipal scenario. The play gives numerous indications that Antigone views her decision and its repercussions in precisely these terms. She describes her "future" with the dead Polynices as if he were to be her husband in Hades: φίλη μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ κείcομαι, φίλου μέτα, "I will lie with him, beloved with beloved" (73–74);[47] κείcομαι repeats at 76. But it is the contemptuous Creon who most clearly defines Antigone's choice as an oedipal rejection of proper marriage. His snide reply to her high ideals, κάτω νυν ἐλθοῦc᾽, εἰ φιλητέον, φίλει / κείνουc ("if you must love, go down [to the underworld] and love *them*," 524–25),[48] prefigures his more explicit remarks to Haemon at 653–54: δυcμενῆ μέθεc / τὴν παῖδ᾽ ἐν ῎Αιδου τήνδε νυμφεύειν τινί, "let the girl go to marry someone in Hades."[49] The above-mentioned choral ode to Eros at the end of this father/son encounter not only looks backward, to explain Haemon's motivation, but also looks forward to Antigone's final march to her tomb.[50] The *eros* of each is parallel but non-reciprocal: Haemon for his fiancé and Antigone for her brother, and death itself.[51] Her imminent death is styled a marriage to Hades that displaces a far more desirable earthly marriage: οὔτ᾽ ἐπὶ νυμφείοιc πώ μέ τιc ὕμνοc ὕμνηcεν, ἀλλ᾽ ᾽Αχέροντι νυμφεύcω ("No marriage-song will sound for me at my wedding, but I will marry Acheron,"

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47 Or, *per* Brown 1987, "a loved one with a loved one"; or *per* Knox 1964.81, "beloved with him I love." Φίλοc, of course, need not imply romantic or any sort of love; see Blundell 1989.41–46, who comments, "*Philos* and the superlative *philtatos* are regularly used for relatives regardless of sentiment, though an element of affection would normally be taken for granted" (1989: 43); Brown 1987 *ad* line 10; and Knox 1964.80–82. Like English "friend," the term can denote (as Brown suggests), "anything from a close relative to a political ally." In this context, however, particularly with Creon's snide use of the term (see below), the repetition of κείcομαι very strongly suggests a reading closer to the erotic than to the merely associative. ᾽Αρέcκειν at 75 and 89 may have erotic coloring as well.

48 The exact meanings of Antigone's and Creon's words in this section have been discussed endlessly; see Brown 1987 with references, Blundell 1989.112–15.

49 The best discussion to date of Antigone's acknowledgment of this replacement remains Murnaghan 1986, who limits herself, however, to the problematic lines 905–20. Most valuable is her demonstration of the consistency of Antigone's logic in her final speech with views expressed in *Eumenides*, Herodotus (Intaphernes' wife), and Pericles' funeral oration. Redfield 1982 and Seaford 1987 discuss the funerary aspects of the Greek marriage ceremony; Seaford focuses on tragedy, Redfield on actual Greek weddings.

50 Depicted as a hymenaeal procession, as Seaford 1987.108 argues.

51 On this particular characteristic of Antigone's *eros* see Goldhill 1990.104.

814–16; this last theme is repeated at 876–77 and 917). The cave in which she is to be enclosed is styled a marriage-chamber first by the chorus (τὸν παγκοίταν . . . θάλαμον, 804)[52] and then quite distinctly by Antigone herself: ὦ τύμβοc, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατακκαφὴc / οἴκηcιc ἀείφρουροc, "Oh tomb, bridal-chamber, eternal grave-home" (891–92).

The great tragedy of Antigone's final scene (as is true of so many final scenes in Greek tragedy) is her eleventh-hour understanding of an irreconcilable conflict in her nature. By likening her funeral march to a wedding procession, and her tomb to a wedding chamber (the mirror image of a traditional wedding lament), Antigone acknowledges that her excessive devotion to her male natal relatives has denied her the sweetness that comes with the resolution of oedipal conflict: marriage and children. Her references to marriage are recorded above; in addition she laments her childlessness at 917–18: οὔτε του γάμου / μέροc λαχοῦcαν οὔτε παιδείου τροφῆc, "taking no part in marriage or the rearing of a child."[53] In this moment of self-recognition, Antigone mourns the marriage which her oedipal attachments have denied her; her lament reiterates this theme four times.

Antigone's final and highly controversial speech at 905ff. caps this lament and, like Neuburg 1990, I find the lines in question not only explicable but essential on one further level. Her straightforward statement that she would not have behaved the same way on behalf of a husband or son is simply an acknowledgement of the reasons why she *did* bury Polynices. The husband and son represent the marriage family, Polynices the natal family. Within a psychoanalytic reading, this is a classic representation of oedipal attachment vs. oedipal resolution; Antigone's oedipal attachment to her brother, transferred from an initial attachment to her father, replaces the devotion a "normal" woman would direct to a marriage family, for which Antigone expresses only abstract, eleventh-hour sentiment. With these lines she confesses that affection for an appropriate mate is impossible for her after her long years in oedipal exile, and she grieves that she will never achieve maturity and fulfillment as defined for females by her society.

Antigone's oedipal attachments and ambivalence about exogamic

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52 Jebb 1900 *ad* 804 observed that the association of the tomb with the wedding chamber was common in epitaphs for unmarried women and men both. Seaford 1987.107 observes that the reverse is also true, that funerary-style lament was part of the wedding ceremony. He cites for comparative material Alexiou 1974.

53 As her name suggests; see Hamilton 1992.95 for the ambiguity of ἀντι-.

marriage have particular relevance to the emotional life of Athenian women attending the theater in the 440s. Antigone's oedipal crisis reflects a certainly milder but still pronounced attachment to natal male relatives that could easily be predicted from the structure of the Athenian family and its rearing of female children. Increasingly in the fifth century, and particularly after the new, stricter citizenship law of 451 that would have resulted in an even closer scrutiny of a new bride's "credentials," immature Greek females were cloistered in the natal home until thrust into an arranged marriage with a virtual stranger. This overly protective marriage system separated young females from the society of men, then abruptly severed them from the natal family that had been their only physical and emotional support during childhood to place them in marriage. The psychological consequences of such cloistering on Greek females can only be surmised; its goal, however, and presumably its effect, was to deny them the opportunity to forge ties with non-natal males that might call into question their chastity. Relationships with non-family members of the opposite sex gradually help wean children of both sexes away from the oedipal attachments of childhood; an utter lack of such ties must have ill-prepared Greek females for their marriages in which they not only had to muster affection and loyalty for a male with whom they had no prior experience, but also had to transfer their allegiance to an entirely alien family and leave their old attachments behind.

Sophocles' *Antigone* is not the only fifth-century tragedy that seems to make a straightforward appeal to the psychological aspects of the marriage experience of Athenian women. Playwrights frequently attempted to document the emotional response of women, both pre- and post-nuptial, to the Greek marriage system generally. Medea eloquently commiserates with the chorus of Corinthian women about the griefs of marriage in Euripides' *Medea* 230ff.: in addition to the necessity of purchasing a spouse because unmarried life is even worse than marriage, she details the pain of separation from the natal family and the difficulties of getting along in the unfamiliar marriage family; above all, there is the terrible loneliness. The fact that Medea's own marriage did not take place in accordance with the traditional Greek structure (no official marriage, no dowry, and no in-laws with whom the bride lived) demonstrates that these observations are intended for her Athenian female audience, through her immediate audience, the chorus of Corinthian women. Deianira also expresses a nostalgia verging on mourning for her adolescent past in her opening lines in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*: her fear of marriage as a young girl (granted that her

suitor was unusually repulsive) is equalled by the many worries of married life with Heracles. The natal home and its relationships represent safety, youth, and happiness; the marital bed, although the central symbol of female fulfillment through marriage in Greek society, also brings responsibility, grief, and pain.[54]

The Sophoclean life of Antigone, taken as a whole, reflects on a grand scale the ambivalence about marriage such a system inevitably produced. After a life of devotion to Oedipus, she does not, and perhaps cannot, take the leap to leave behind her oedipal attachments for a conventional marriage. In her early biography, Antigone transfers her affections to her brothers, and to Polynices specifically in *Antigone*. When this devotion earns her death, she both laments that death as a substitute marriage, and justifies its inevitability for a child devoted to the oedipal project.[55]

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54 Penelope's employment of this symbol to unveil Odysseus in *Odyssey* 23 is a most poignant reminder of its emotional centrality. The marital bed also figures prominently in tragedy as the preferred locus for the suicide of tragic heroines; see Loraux 1987.

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