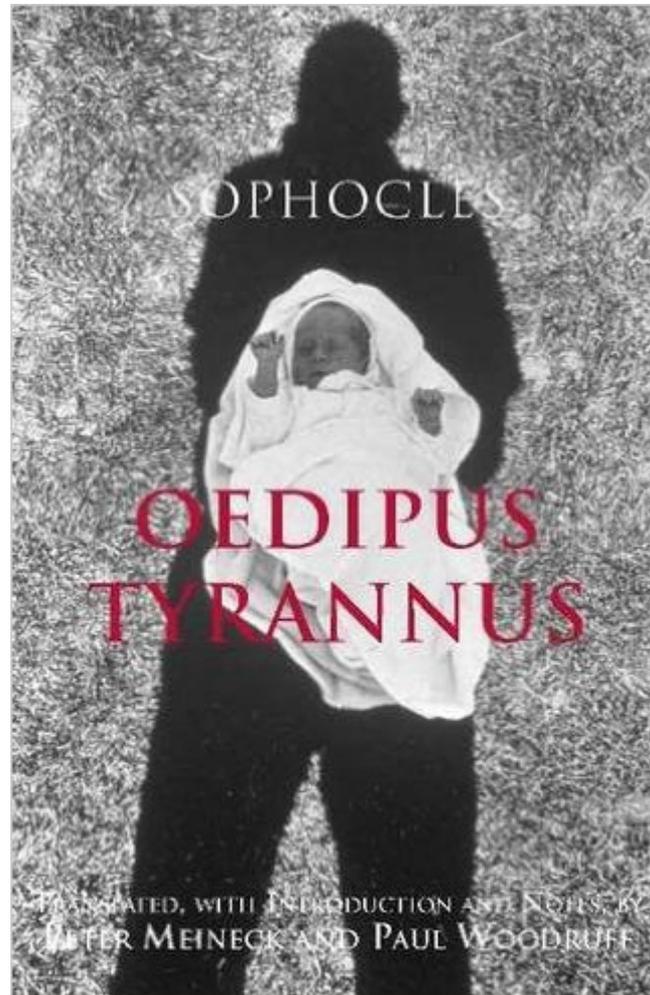


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Oedipus Tyrannus



Synopsis

Peter Meineck and Paul Woodruff's collaboration on this new translation combines the strengths that have recently distinguished both as translators of Greek tragedy: expert knowledge of the Greek and of the needs of the teaching classicist, intimate knowledge of theatre, and an excellent ear for the spoken word. Their *Oedipus Tyrannus* features foot-of-the-page notes, an Introduction, stage directions and a translation characterized by its clarity, accuracy, and power.

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Customer Reviews

"Oedipus Tyrannus" ("Oedipus the King") is not only the most read of all the Greek tragedies, it is also the most misread of the Greek dramas. The play's reputation exists in part because it was presented as the paragon of the dramatic form by Aristotle in his "Poetics," and it may well be because of that fact that "Oedipus Tryannus" was one of the relatively few plays by Sophocles to be passed down from ancient times. When I have taught Greek tragedies in various classes students have reconsidered the play in terms of key concepts such as *harmartia* ("tragic error of judgment"), *angonrrisis* ("recognition"), *peripeteia* ("reversal"), *catharsis*, etc., and they usually agree this play provides the proverbial textbook examples of these terms. However, I was always bothered by the fact that Sophocles engages in some rather heavy-handed foreshadowing regarding the fact that the play's tragic hero is going to blind himself before the conclusion. The lines were closer to, dare I say, sophomoric humor than eloquently setting up the climax. But then I read something very, very interesting in Homer's "Iliad," where there appears a single reference to Oedipus which suggests that he died in battle. Remember now that Homer's epics were written several hundred years before

Sophocles was born and that the Greek playwrights were allowed to take great liberties with the various myths (consider the three different versions of the death of Clytemnestra at the hands of Orestes we have from Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus). The Athenian audience would know its Homer, but "Oedipus Tyrannus" was a new play. This leads me to advance a very interesting possibility: the Greek audience did not know that Oedipus was going to blind himself. This was a new idea.

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