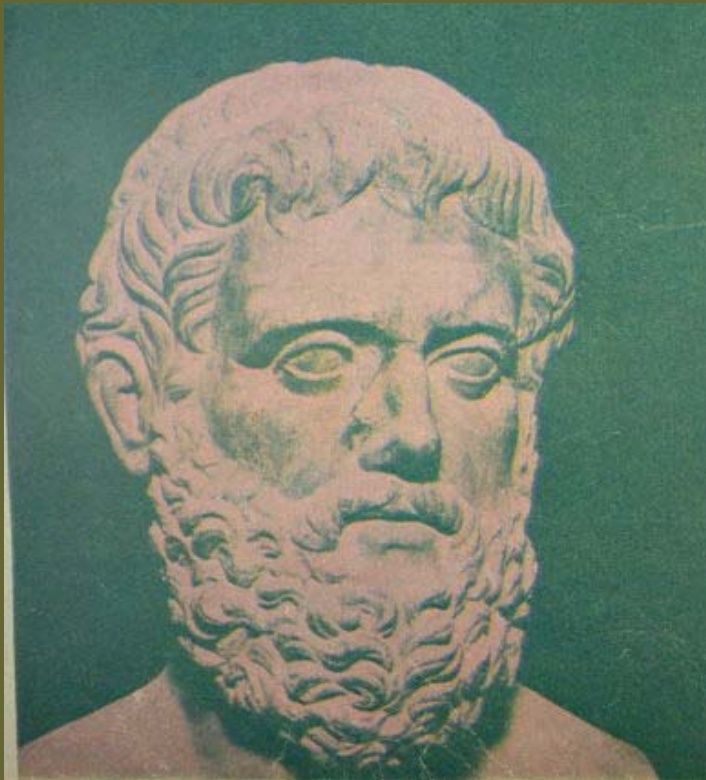


# Sophocles (496~406BC)



## Oedipus Trilogy:

1. *Oedipus Rex (Oedipus the King)*
2. *Oedipus at Colonus*
3. *Antigone*

# The Oedipus Trilogy

Sophocles is more concerned with **exploring and developing individual characters** in his drama than with expounding a point of view; in general, Sophocles seems to combine an awareness of the **tragic consequences of individual mistakes** with a belief in the **collective ability and dignity of the human race**.

For Sophocles, the choice between good and evil is never clear or easy and is sometime impossible. More than any of his contemporaries, Sophocles emphasizes how much lies outside our own control, in the hands of destiny or the gods.

His insistence that we respect and revere the forces that we can not see or understand makes him **the most traditionally religious of the tragedians**. These ambiguities appear in his best-known play, *Oedipus the King*, which stood ever since Classical times as a symbol of Greek tragic drama.

# The Family of Oedipus

Cadmos~ Harmonia

```
graph TD; A[Cadmos~ Harmonia] --- B[Agave~ Echion]; A --- C[Polydoros~ Nycteis]; A --- D[Ino~ Athamas]; A --- E[Semele~ Zeus]; A --- F[Autonoe]; C --- G[Laios~ Iocasta]; G --- H[Oedipus~ Iocasta]; H --- I[Eteocles]; H --- J[Polyneices]; H --- K[Antigones]; H --- L[Ismene];
```

Agave~ Echion

Polydoros~ Nycteis

Ino~ Athamas

Semele~ Zeus

Autonoe

Laios~ Iocasta

Oedipus~ Iocasta

Eteocles

Polyneices

Antigones

Ismene

- The tragic curse on the family of Cadamus





# The Delphic Oracle



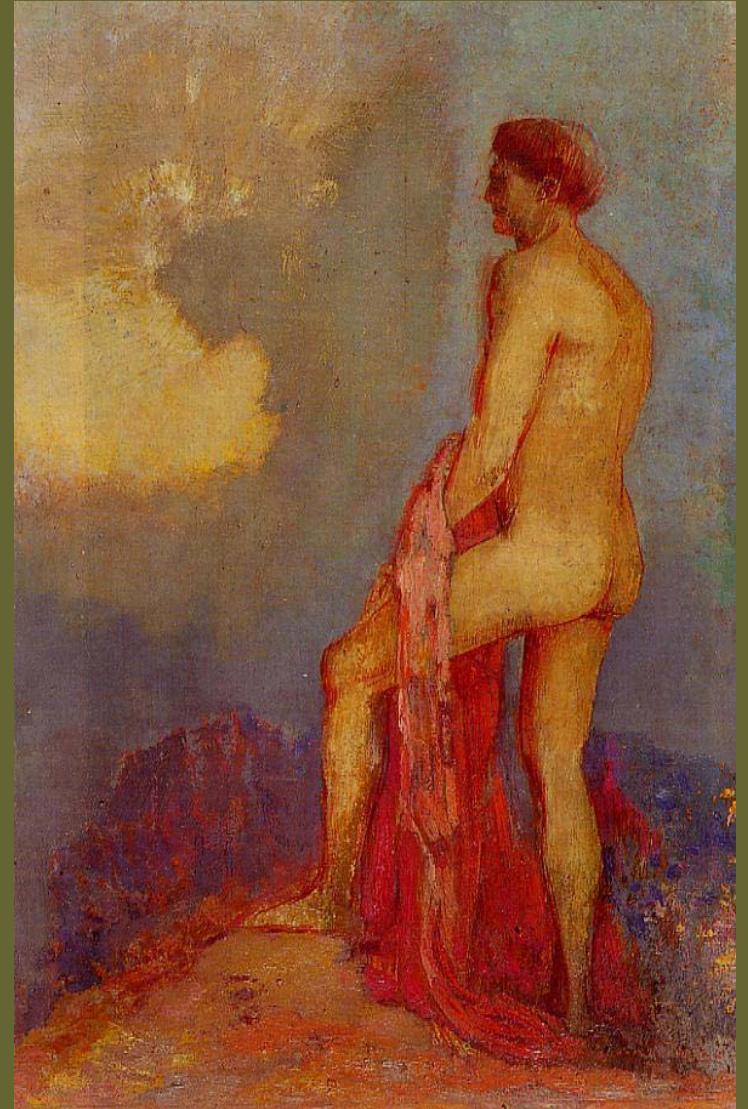
Treasure of the Athenians (Delphi). Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML



The Rock of the Sibyl at Delphi. Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML



# The Mystery & Illusion of Life



- Why does Oedipus deserve to suffer?

# Oedipus & the Sphinx



- Ingres



# Oedipus & the Sphinx

- Moreau





# Blindness & Insight



- Who is really blind? Tiresias or Oedipus?

# The tragedy continues:



- Oedipus cursed on his children





Eteocles to confront his brother. Engraving 19CAD. Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML.

- Seven against Thebes



# Conflict of Values: Family vs. State



- Oedipus & Antigone 1



## Oedipus & Antigone 2

R. Tegner 1873-1950: Oedipus & Antigone. Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML.















# Aristotle's Definition of Tragedy

- Imitation of an action : *mimesis*
- The action = plot = the downfall of a noble hero
- Complete: beginning, middle, ending  
beginning → *in medias res*
- Different parts: Structure of tragedy
- *Catharsis*: psychological effect of tragedy

Action: searching for the murderer of King Laios in order to purge the plague in Thebes.

- A causal, inevitable sequence of events connected intimately with the personality of the tragic hero.
- *Harmartia* = tragic flaw
- *Hubris* = excessive pride

