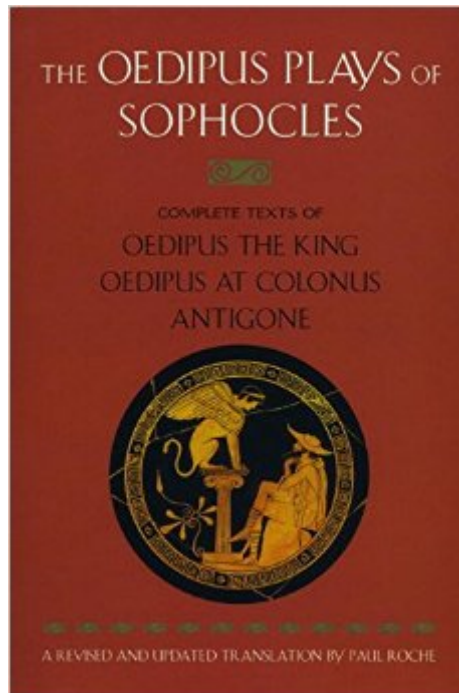


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The Oedipus Plays Of Sophocles: Oedipus The King; Oedipus At Colonus; Antigone



Synopsis

Revising and updating his classic 1958 translation, Paul Roche captures the dramatic power and intensity, the subtleties of meaning, and the explosive emotions of Sophocles' great Theban trilogy. In vivid, poetic language, he presents the timeless story of a noble family moving toward catastrophe, dragged down from wealth and power by pride, cursed with incest, suicide, and murder.

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Customer Reviews

Most English translations of, say, the Greek New Testament are shepherded by a conviction that the original words had divine inspiration and so are best rendered verbatim wherever possible. At the same time, there generally is a concession (for good or ill) to the reality that if what results is not sufficiently lofty and reverential in tone, the faithful are unlikely to accept it. Attempts at classical Greek drama and poetry tend to be guided by rather different considerations: The translator's audience may consist of fellow scholars, reluctant undergraduate students, or an adventurous minority of the general public; and each of these groups will have particular demands. Too often work thus emerges which is precise but lifeless, or loosely interpreted to conform to the structures of 19th-century-style Anglo-American poetry, or so liberally seasoned with present-day colloquialisms as to jar the reader repeatedly out of the proper period and setting. For the most part, Paul Roche navigates skilfully through these hazards in trying his hand at Sophocles's Oedipus trilogy, and has produced a rendition that is readable, yet preserves classical distinctiveness. Once or twice in the

first play a turn of phrase does feel awkwardly modern, but such flashes are rare and soon either disappear or blend into the overall arc of the stories. That Roche is himself a poet clearly enriched the labour, and his reflections, in the Introduction, on the essence of poetry and the challenge of its transmission across lines of language, era, and culture border on the profound. '... Poetry lies somewhere between meaning and music, sense and sound ...,' he writes; and in this region he attempts to set Sophocles's work.

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