



The Phoenician Women, by Euripides
Recension/translation by David Travis

Antigone in Despair

Antigone enters with the bodies of Jokasta, Eteokles, and Polyneikes.

Antigone

Rip the veil of maiden modesty
From my tender cheek, [1485]
No shame, never again, to show
My dark red face, my hot tears...
Ah! Dionysos, I am yours! [1490]
My hair is unbound for you
My robe flies loose for you
I bring my dead to you in my despair: "AIAI, Io Moi!"
Oh, Polyneikes! Oh brother, you were rightly named, after all; [1495]
Your strife – not only strife, but murder on murder —
You have soaked our father's house in blood. Our lifeblood.
O Thebes! Oh, my home! Oh, my home!
How can I express my sorrow?
What lamentation can I summon [1500]
For my tears,
As I bear these three dear kindred bodies,
My slaughtered mother and her sons.
A welcome sight to you, o Furies!
You have hounded us, destroyed the house of Oedipus, [1505]
Ever since he solved the Sphinx's song
And silenced her as she sang.
Oh my father!
What man has ever endured such [1510]
Anguish in his brief day of life?
Ah me! Poor me. How pitiful are my tears! [1515]
A poor girl marked by fate to live out her days among her tears.
On which of these shall I throw my offerings first, [1525]
This hair torn from my head?
On the breasts of the mother who nursed me,
Or on the yawning wounds cut into my brothers' corpses?
Out! Come out of the house! Father! [1530]
Oedipus, show yourself! Reveal the misery that is your life,
Wearily dragging out your sad existence,
Wandering endlessly down the palace halls..



Or lying on your bed, waiting for death. [1535]
No more! Do you hear, you wretched old man?
Come out! Come into the light, and see!

Oedipus enters from the palace.

Oedipus

What do you want of me, daughter? [1540]
Why have you summoned me into the waking world,

A ghost caged in darkness
A phantom, a flying dream? [1545]

Antigone

Father, you must hear what has happened, what sorrows are ours to bear;
Your sons are dead.
And your wife, your wife who always loved and cared for you,
Your staff in your old age, she too is dead. [1550]
O father!

Oedipus

Ah! All three!?! (*groans/cries*)
How did it happen? What was their fate?
O my child, tell me. [1555]

Antigone

Your own avenging curse,
Heavy with killing swords and burning war,
Has finally crushed your family. O father!