Finglass, P. J. (2020). Sophocles: Greek poet, world classic. In K. Seigneurie, & W. Denecke (Eds.), *A Companion to World Literature: Third Millenium B.C.E. – 600 C.E.* (A Companion to World Literature; Vol. 1). Wiley-Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118635193.ctwl0032

Peer reviewed version

Link to published version (if available):
10.1002/9781118635193.ctwl0032

Link to publication record in Explore Bristol Research
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This is the accepted author manuscript (AAM). The final published version (version of record) is available online via Wiley-Blackwell at https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118635193.ctwl0032.Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

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SOPHOCLES: GREEK POET, WORLD CLASSIC

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Word Count: 6,058

This chapter examines Sophocles, one of the three famous tragic poets from classical Greece, from the perspective of world literature. It gives a brief account of the context of his life and writings, before investigating the process whereby Sophocles' works grew to be appreciated across so many centuries and so many cultures. It begins by looking at the spread of Sophoclean tragedy across the Greek world, something that began in Sophocles' own day. It then considers the Romans' engagement with Sophocles, including at the funeral games for Julius Caesar, before analysing the place of Sophocles in the Byzantine empire, as well as noting early Arab contact with his works via an Arabic translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Finally, the chapter pursues the story past the coming of the printing press down to the modern world, surveying the engagement with *Antigone* and the fragmentary play *The Trackers* by translators and producers from a variety of different cultures.

With impressive concision, this volume covers the literature from across the planet during a period lasting more than three and a half millennia in a mere fifty-two chapters. Yet fully three of those chapters, more than 5% of the total, are dedicated to three writers, from the same century, from the same ethnic group, from the same city, who competed in the same festivals, before the same audiences, in the same genre, for the same prizes. Such unusual editorial generosity directed towards what may at first

seem a mere sliver of human experience hints at the impact that these three writers have had on world literature, an impact far beyond the immediate circumstances of the composition of their works. This chapter is devoted to one of these writers, to Sophocles. It cannot hope, and does not try, even to summarise Sophocles' influence on so many literatures and cultures round the globe. Rather, it sketches what we know about Sophocles' achievement in his own day, and then looks at the spread of his works beyond his home town, particularly during antiquity, but also down to the modern period. Along the way, it investigates particular resonances of Sophocles' work, focusing from time to time on particular plays, at particular times, and in particular contexts, attempting to identify what has made Sophocles' work so approachable, so relevant, to successive generations in the past, and to a still-growing number of different cultures today.

The key facts of Sophocles' life can be briefly stated. Born in the deme (village, town) of Colonus near Athens in the early 490s BC, he died in late 406, also at Athens, where he spent his entire career; his long life thus coincided with the great flowering of Greek, especially Athenian, culture during the fifth century in terms of drama, history, philosophy, rhetoric, democracy, and the visual arts, a period which for that reason has traditionally been given the name 'classical'. Sophocles was a dramatic poet, composing plays for the two great annual festivals in honour of the god Dionysus held every year in Athens, the Dionysia and the Lenaea, and probably also for the Rural Dionysia which involved performances in the deme theatres in towns in Attica, the region around Athens which formed part of the same political unit as the city. (During this period Greeks shared a common sense of identity, but not not a common state; they were split into hundreds of separate political units of various sizes, of which Athens/Attica was the largest and most powerful.)

The plays that Sophocles wrote were mostly tragedies, serious plays set in the world of heroic myth. Many of these plays are associated with the Trojan cycle of mythology, in which the Greeks joined forces to besiege and eventually sack the city of Troy on the north-west coast of Asia minor: these include *The Shepherds*, which gave an account of the beginning of the war and the killing of the Greek warrior Protesilaus and the Trojan Cycnus; *Ajax*, which depicts the suicide of one of the greatest Greek warriors at Troy; *Philoctetes*, in which the title character is brought from Lemnos, where he had previously been abandoned because of an incurable wound which made him an impossible companion, to Troy in order to provide essential assistance in the closing stages of the war; *Eurypylus*, a play showing the arrival of a new ally of the Trojans, who achieves success before he is cut down; *Ajax the Locrian*, an account of the other warrior called Ajax, whose crime against Athena during the sack of Troy was punished by his death on the way home to Greece; and *Electra*, which depicted the devastating effect on the daughter of the leader of the Greek expedition after he was murdered by his wife Clytemnestra on arriving home. Other plays are connected with the myths associated with the other great cycle of Greek myth, associated with the city of Thebes: *Niobe*, in which the wife of Amphion, founder of Thebes, is punished for arrogance by the gods Apollo and Artemis, who kill all her children; *Oedipus the King*, in which Oedipus discovers that he has unwittingly killed his father and married his mother; *Oedipus at Colonus*, in which Oedipus arrives at Colonus near Athens, there to die and thereby grant Athens the mysterious power that comes with possessing his corpse; *Antigone*, in which Oedipus' daughter resists the new ruler of Thebes concerning the burial of her brother and is imprisoned underground for her pains. But plenty of plays belonged to neither cycle: for example, *Tereus*, in which the king of Thrace rapes and mutilates his Athenian

wife's sister, only for the two women to punish him by killing his son; *Oenomaus*, where Hippodameia, daughter of the king of Elis, falls in love with Pelops, who probably defeats his father in a chariot-race and kills him to win her hand; *Trachiniae* (*The Women of Trachis*), which depicted the unintentional killing of Heracles by the hand of his wife Deianira, who had sent him a poison which she thought an aphrodisiac; and *Thyestes at Sicyon*, in which the title character rapes his own daughter to produce a son who, according to a prophecy, would be able to wreak vengeance on Thyestes' brother Atreus, who had previously tricked him into eating a banquet composed of his own children's flesh. Just the plot summaries of these plays indicate the terrible crimes and dreadful sufferings which were a mainstay of Sophoclean tragedy.

Then there were satyr-plays, which took a more down-to-earth view of that mythical world, incorporating into it choruses of satyrs, half-human, half-animal creatures addicted to sensual pleasure: these included *Ichneutae* (*The Searching Satyrs*), a play where the satyrs are hired by Apollo to track down his stolen cattle which they trace to the newly-born god Hermes; and probably *Inachus*, which featured the god Zeus's affair with Inachus' daughter Io. At the Dionysia each of the three entrants to the dramatic competition put on a tetralogy of three tragedies followed by a satyr-play, in front of an audience of many thousands of people, including men and women, Athenians and Greeks from other cities. Sophocles first competed in a dramatic festival probably in the 470s, and went on composing throughout his life. He wrote well over a hundred plays (of the figures which have survived from antiquity, 123 is the most likely), and won repeatedly at the Dionysia; when he did not win, he was always placed second, since we are told that he never

finished last. This is a remarkable record: for decades, from his youth until extreme old age, Sophocles succeeded in delighting generations of theatre-goers.

Yet for an author who enjoyed considerable success in his own day, and who would in time become an author familiar all over the world, Sophocles himself showed remarkably little inclination to travel. We are told in the *Life* of Sophocles (written two or three centuries after his death) that he was so devoted to Athens that, although many foreign potentates attempted to woo him away, he was not willing to abandon his homeland. Other tragedians were not so fastidious. Aeschylus, a generation older than Sophocles, produced plays in Sicily (settled by Greeks from the eighth century BC), and indeed died there in 456; while Euripides, Sophocles' younger contemporary, put on plays for the king of Macedon, and his death in 407/6 may well have taken place at his court. Already in the fifth century, tragedy had enormous cultural prestige both around the Greek world (which thanks to extensive Greek settlement around the Mediterranean was far larger than the modern state of Greece) and outside it (since whether Macedonians counted as Greek was a disputed point). Because of this prestige, it is likely that, even if Sophocles himself did not travel beyond Attica, performances of his plays were taking place around the Mediterranean already during his lifetime, and it is certain that this was happening in the fourth century (Finglass 2015, Stewart 2017). Indeed, the desire of rulers outside Athens for him to come demonstrates the growth of his reputation and thus the long reach of his plays. Once a single Sophoclean script was in someone else's possession, there was nothing to stop that person from taking it to an interested ruler or city and putting on a performance – and thus began Sophocles' journey to international renown. Sophocles himself may have co-operated with this process, even if he did not travel to supervise

such reperformances; there is no reason to think that he was untouched by a desire for the fame and glory that would come from the spread of his works.

In the fourth century we know of famous actors, celebrities in their own times, who travelled all around the Greek world with Sophocles' plays a key part of their repertoire; wherever the Greeks were settled, around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, they could have seen performances of his plays. Specific evidence for performances in Sicily and south Italy comes from three vases which appear to depict scenes from his plays – a Sicilian calyx-krater from *c.* 330, which probably shows a scene from Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*; a Lucanian bell-krater from *c.* 350, which probably depicts his *Electra*; and an Apulian kalyx-krater from *c.* 340, in which *Oedipus at Colonus* is probably depicted (Taplin 2007, 90–2, 96–7, 100–2). In each case, the depictions seem so near to the Sophoclean plays in question that we can talk about evocation of the actual plays, not just of the myths; and this implies performance of those plays in those communities, since otherwise the images on the vases would make no sense.

Although three vases are doubtless a small proportion of the total number, now almost all lost, which depicted Sophoclean plays, and cannot be regarded as a random or typical sample, it is nevertheless intriguing to see the scenes that, at least in these particular cases, seem to have fascinated artists and viewers in the wider Greek world during this period. In the case of the vase probably illustrating *Oedipus the King*, we see the moment when the old Corinthian shepherd, while describing events of years ago, has revealed that he rescued a baby exposed by a member of the household of the old king Laius. The man on the shepherd's left is stroking his beard as he listens to him; a woman to that man's left, by contrast, holds her hands up to her head in a gesture of distress. This matches the reactions of Oedipus and his wife

Jocasta to the Corinthian's news in Sophocles' play: Oedipus is fascinated, but Jocasta realises the truth, that the baby in question was Oedipus, and urgently begs her husband not to proceed with an investigation which she now knows will be disastrous for him. It is a moment of high drama within this most dramatic of plays, a moment where Oedipus' failure to realise the truth is highlighted through Jocasta's ability to see it all too clearly, where Jocasta's previous disbelief in oracles is revealed to be ill-founded in the most appalling way, where the words of an ordinary, nameless character have an impact far beyond anything that he could have anticipated. Seeing it represented on this vase at least hints that the audiences of fourth-century Sicily found this moment as powerful as we do today; Sophocles evidently had composed a drama capable of moving audiences beyond that of his immediate public at Athens, and the highlighting of this particular moment helps us to see why.

The same can be said of the scene on the vase illustrating *Electra*. Two young men are standing on the left, facing a young woman who is standing on the right; one of the men holds out an urn to her, and she responds by holding her right hand towards her face, apparently anxious (Finglass 2017, 493–4). This is the moment when Electra receives from her brother Orestes, whom she does not yet recognise, the urn which she has been told contains her brother's ashes; in the play she then delivers a memorable lament over the vessel, after which Orestes, shocked to learn that this is his sister, reveals his identity to her. This is the emotional high point of Sophocles' drama: he gives far more emphasis to this moment than Aeschylus or Euripides do when presenting the recognitions in their respective plays on this subject. Aristotle in his *Poetics*, writing roughly when these vases were being painted, discusses at length the different kinds of recognition (*anagnôrisis* in Greek) found in tragedy. It is no coincidence that these two vases also focus on key moments of recognition and non-

recognition which stand at the emotional heart of their respective dramas; these moments, highlighted on the vases, are part of the great emotional charge that give Sophocles' tragedies a universal appeal.

Sophocles' texts reached Egypt no later than the third century BC, which is when the great age of Hellenistic scholarship began. Scholars at Alexandria edited texts of the plays and equipped them with commentaries explaining points of difficulty; these texts became a standard point of reference across the Greek-speaking world. The next stage in the internationalisation of Sophocles' works was at the hands of the Romans (Holford-Strevens 1999). Influenced by Greek culture as early as the eighth century BC, they started translating and adapting Greek drama from the third. Unfortunately, none of these versions has survived in full, and the fragments of individual plays are far too meagre to indicate precisely what kind of interaction they had with Sophocles' work. One fragment of the *Antigone* by Accius (170–86 BC; see Sconocchia 1972) contains the sentiment 'Now the gods do not control the affairs of men, nor does the supreme ruler of the gods care for them', which seems to echo Antigone's lament in Sophocles' play 'Why should I in my wretchedness still look to the gods?' (*Antigone* 922–3; thus Holford-Strevens 1999, 224). In Sophocles' play Antigone stands up to Creon, who is presented as a tyrant rather than as a true representative of the city; this point will have been crucial in ensuring that a Roman audience remained sympathetic to her, since putting the state above family loyalties was a common feature of Roman mythology and ideology, and so we may imagine that Accius retained it from the Sophoclean original (thus Holford-Strevens 1999, 226–7). Pacuvius (active *c.* 200–140 BC) in his *Niptra*, a play based on Sophocles' drama of the same name, portrayed Odysseus as less given over to tears, as the orator and stateman Cicero (106–43 BC) described with approval (*Tusculan Dissertations*

2.48–50). Cicero's uneasiness with the forcefulness of the emotions expressed by Sophocles' characters is evident from his translation of, and brief comments on, Heracles' great lament from *Trachiniae* (*Tusculan Dissertations* 2.20–3, 3.71; see Holford-Strevens 1999, 227–9), which tones down Heracles' expression of agony and takes him to task for expressing himself so openly.

The few lines of *Trachiniae* translated by Cicero remind us that this was the first period during which Sophocles' works were translated into a foreign language. Cicero's translation adapted Sophocles' language to suit the demands of Roman drama, retaining aspects of the original but altering what he wanted. Thanks to Cicero (*De Finibus* 1.4-5), we know of a translation of Sophocles' *Electra* by the dramatist Atilius – a translation from which extracts were sung during the games after the funeral of Julius Caesar (Suetonius, *Caesar* 1.84.2). This is a remarkable moment in the context of Sophocles' journey to the status of 'world literature'. A play written by Sophocles for performance in the democratic city of Athens, before an audience containing a preponderance of Athenian citizens, men whose fate rested to a great degree with the decisions that they made in the participatory assembly, was now performed in the capital city of an empire which included Athens, in the context of a slain dictator's funeral games, before an audience devoted above all to his memory, whom the singing of the play was intended to incite to vengeance; Electra's murdered father Agamemnon, the man responsible for the greatest feat of arms by the Greeks of ancient myth, was thereby assimilated to the most successful Roman general in history, each of whom had been assassinated at home by those closest to him. We see the malleability of Sophoclean myth; we see ths ability of Sophocles' play to transcend its local political context; we see how Electra's passionate laments, evoked,

as we have seen, on the Lucanian vase in the fourth century, evidently spoke powerfully to another audience in Italy several hundred years later.

Drama was not the only medium through which appreciation for Sophocles can be discerned during the Roman period. An epigram written in Greek, by a man with a Roman name, Statilius Flaccus, from approximately the turn of the eras, described Sophocles' poetry in the following terms (*Anthologia Palatina* 9.98 = 3821–6 *GP*, translation by Gow and Page):

> Two plays on Oedipus, Electra's grievous wrath, the sun put to flight by the feast of Atreus, and other books worthy of Dionysus' choral dance about kings of manifold sufferings – these have approved you, Sophocles, as leader of the Tragic company; you, who have spoken with your heroes' very lips.

Statilius gives little idea of why Sophocles is worthy of praise, except in his reference to his 'heroes' – perhaps suggesting that Sophocles' plays were notable thanks to the mighty protagonists who seem to dominate them (a point which distinguishes Sophocles from Aeschylus and Euripides, and which has been a mainstay of an influential strain of twentieth-century criticism) – and in his description of Electra's 'grievous wrath', again highlighting her emotions and the dreadful force of the passion that she directs against her father's killers.

Sophocles was drawn on by major non-dramatic Latin poets in this period: so Virgil in the *Aeneid* made use of his *Ajax* (Panoussi 2002, 2009) and a recently-published papyrus has shown that Ovid drew on his *Tereus* (Finglass 2016, 70–2, 2019; in general, see Curley 2013). Many of these poets' original readerships will have appreciated the allusions to Sophocles' plays; in time, however, Sophocles'

plays were lost in the west altogether, and so such associations would no longer be apparent. The myth of Tereus, with the grim vengeance perpetrated on the Thracian king for his rape and mutilation of his wife's sister, probably took on its familiar form in Sophocles' drama of that name; but that form would reach the mediaeval and modern worlds only through Ovid's retelling of Sophocles' story, which later readers would not even recognise as originally belonging to the Greek dramatist. In this way it was through Ovid and other Latin poets that Sophocles would reach the status of world literature in the Latin-dominated west, even if the nature of his contribution to their myths was no longer apparent.

Sophocles did survive in the Greek east, but in attenuated form (Finglass 2012): from the fourth century AD onwards only seven of his plays seem to have been available to readers in Egypt, which at the time was Greek-speaking, and from where a few fragments of ancient manuscripts of his works have been discovered, and it is likely that a similar pattern prevailed elsewhere. The earliest manuscript containing the seven surviving plays in full dates to *c.* AD 950, and was written in Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, which at this time was the only state in which any texts of Sophocles were available. The absence of a dramatic tradition in Byzantine culture meant that Sophocles no longer had the kind of mass popularity which he had enjoyed in his own day, and then (via translation) in Caesar's Rome; he was at least familiar to scholars and taught in schools as a means of appreciating what was thought to have been the purest form of Greek. Moreover, like the rest of Greek tragedy, Sophocles' plays were not included among those ancient works translated from Greek into Arabic, Persian, or Syriac during late antiquity or the middle ages. (Aristotle's *Poetics* were translated into Arabic, however, three times, and the translation by Abu Bishr Matta ibn Yunus, from the late ninth/early tenth century,

survives; as Etman 2014, 1050–1 notes, this did lead to mentions of Sophocles in Arabic texts, all derived from what Aristotle had to say about him.) During this period Sophocles' plays enjoyed their most restricted circulation since their creation – known only to an educated minority in a single culture. A change in Byzantine educational practice could have seen them lost altogether; thankfully Byzantine cultural conservatism came to their aid.

In the early fourteenth century, as the Byzantine Empire crumbled, manuscripts of Sophocles were taken from Constantinople to Italy; a few years later the printing press was invented. These two events were crucial in securing Sophocles' passage to becoming a classic of world literature: they ensured that his seven surviving plays would be committed to the printing press, an event which took place at the hands of the Aldine Press in Venice in 1502. No longer were Sophocles' surviving plays preserved in just a few dozen manuscripts located in libraries and monasteries across the Greek world; they were now available to anyone able to purchase or consult one of the Greek texts which would continue to issue forth from printing presses during the succeeding decades.

The sixteenth century additionally saw Latin and vernacular translations of Sophocles (Borza 2007); the Latin translations were the first since antiquity, the vernacular ones the first translations ever into any language other than Latin. Such translations refashioned Sophocles' original to suit contemporary ideas. Miola 2014 has shown how aspects of Sophocles' *Antigone*, such as the paradoxical nature of the female lead, who both attracts and repels an audience's sympathies, and the ambiguities inherent in Sophoclean tragedy, are ironed out in Renaissance translations which render the play a more conventional clash between a tyrant and his innocent victim: 'such deflection signals the deep and pervasive unease lurking beneath early

modern readings of Antigone, generating new emphases, new fragmentations, and new adaptations ever increasingly distant from the Sophoclean prototype' (Miola 2014, 240). The sixteenth century also saw the first public performance of Sophocles since antiquity – a crucial part of his growth into a figure of world literature. At Vicenza the new 'Teatro Olimpico' designed by Andrea Palladio was inaugurated on 3rd March 1585 with a performance of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, in a new Italian translation by Orsatto Giustiniani (Burian 1997, 229–31, Migliarisi 2013); *Oedipus the King* was chosen 'primarily because the *Poetics* of Aristotle treated it as the ideal example of what the Renaissance regarded as the most elevated of all literary genres' (Burian 1997, 230).

Sophocles' plays, or at least seven of them, had now made a crucial evolutionary leap: in 1400 they were known in only one culture, but by 1600 they were familiar, at least to the educated, in several, and as those cultures spread across the globe, they took tragedy and Sophocles with them (see e.g. Foley 2012, on Greek tragedy in North America). This process has accelerated in more recent times, especially in the post-war period, and even more so in recent decades as the world has become more interconnected. To an overwhelming extent this process is carried out in translation. The number of people across the world who can read Sophocles in the original is not large – in the low thousands, say. Even among that select group, no-one is in the position of being able to read Sophocles easily, so nuanced and difficult is his language. So it is not in the original but through the media of translation, whether appreciated on the page or on the stage, that Sophocles' remarkable cultural impact is felt today – an impact all the more remarkable because it is increasingly felt in countries not directly affected by Greco-Roman civilization, where there is no deep historical connection such as there is in countries where the literature of Greco-

Roman civilization has already shaped tastes in literature for centuries. In 1984 Steiner could ask ‘Why the unbroken authority of Greek myths over the imagination of the West?’ and go on to ask‘why . . . are they not . . . universal and of equal import to *all* cultures, East or West?’ (Steiner 1984, 300, 301); but the growing interest in Greek tragedy all over the globe means that he would hardly ask the latter question today.

The play most associated with that wide circulation of tragedy, more so than any other by any tragedian, is *Antigone*. As the South African actor, John Kani, said in 2000, ‘Antigone addresses itself to any corner of the world where the human spirit is being oppressed, where people sit in jail because of their fight for human dignity, for freedom’ (Mee 2010, 131). The play ‘has been used to fight apartheid in South Africa, as a way to acknowledge the dead and “disappeared” after the “dirty war” in Argentina, as an assertion of the validity of Creole language and culture in Haiti . . .’ (Mee 2010, 141); it is ‘perhaps the only play, classical or modern, to have been (re)produced all over the world, and an enormous number of these productions have reconceived and remade the play to address modern local – and in some cases international and global – issues and concerns’ (Mee and Foley 2011, 1). Prominent adaptations of Sophocles’ original include those by Salvador Espriu in 1939, which associated Creon with Franco; by Jean Anouilh in 1942, which implicitly attacked the German occupation of France; by Bertolt Brecht in 1948, which aligned Creon with Hitler and the Nazis; by Krystyna Berwińska in 1948, in which ‘Antigone becomes a heroine of revolutionary atheism’ (Kucharski 2014, 1103); by Leopoldo Marechal in 1951, which set the drama in the conflict between the Argentine government and native Indians in the nineteenth century (Corbella 2008); by Félix Morisseau-Leroy in Haiti in 1953 (*Antigòn an Kreyòl* = *Antigone in Creole*, later performed in Paris in

1959 and in Ghana in 1963, with interesting new resonances in each case), where Antigone was a Creole-speaker standing up to a Francophone elite. All these very different reactions to Sophocles' play come from all over the world during a period of less than fifteen years. More recent performances in the early twenty-first century have continued that wide geographical distribution: for instance, those by Kshetrimayum Jugindro Singh, staged at Imphal, India, in 2004 (Mee 2010) at Cape Town in 2004 with John Kani (quoted above) as Creon (van Zyl Smit 2008, 382–3), and in Seamas Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes*, a play first published in 2004, whose author believed that 'with the White House and the Pentagon in cahoots, determined to bring the rest of us into line over Iraq, the passion and protest of an Antigone were all of a sudden as vital as oxygen masks' (Heaney 2005). Steiner's assertion, in the concluding sentence of his book on the reception of *Antigone*, that 'New "Antigones" are being imagined, thought, lived now; and will be tomorrow' (1984, 304), has been more than borne out.

Antigone is highly suitable for this kind of engagement because of the clash between different sorts of authority, different temperaments, and different genders that it portrays; any favoured group can be identified with Antigone, any oppressor with Creon, and aspects of the play that might seem inappropriate in a given new context (e.g. Antigone's belief that the gods support her actions, which might not suit a revolutionary communist perspective, for instance) can be toned down or omitted altogether. But it is certainly not the only play by Sophocles which has had a broader impact on literature across the world. To mention just one, Sophocles' *Ichneutae* (*The Searching Satyrs*), a satyr-play lost in antiquity, of which about half was recovered thanks to the discovery in 1912 of a papyrus of the play from the ancient city of Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, has, despite its recent appearance, nevertheless inspired

literature of its own, in very different contexts: Tony Harrison's *Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* (premiered 1988, revised 1990, first published 1991; see Marshall 2012, González Pérez 2015), which incorporates the story of the fragment within a narrative involving the hunt for ancient Greek manuscripts in Egypt in the early twentieth century, and Ahmed Etman's *The Goats of Albahnasa* (2000), a work by an Egyptian scholar and playwright which draws on both Sophocles and Harrison to 'raise . . . the tension between conservative Islamic ideas and the introduction of new ideas from the Western world' (Almohanna 2010; see also Almohanna 2016). The artistic creativity stimulated by a mere half-play, discovered barely a century ago, and in a genre which has no successor in the modern world, suggests the enduring power of Sophocles' dramatic art to inspire playwrights today, as well as the continued prestige associated with his name.

Much recent scholarship on Sophocles has involved setting his plays in their immediate social and political context, examining to what extent they reflect, support, or challenge, the ideologies of contemporary Athens. Yet as we have seen, in Caesar's Rome a Sophoclean play easily transcended the local conditions of its original performance; and this is something which the embrace of Sophocles by literatures all over the world today has put in starker relief. The process whereby Sophocles became a true 'world poet', one that began in his own lifetime, and which has seen vicissitudes over the centuries since then, may now be complete: but the continuing artistic interaction with his works all over the world is unlikely to be over.

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Cross-references: See also ctwl0031 and ctwl0033.

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