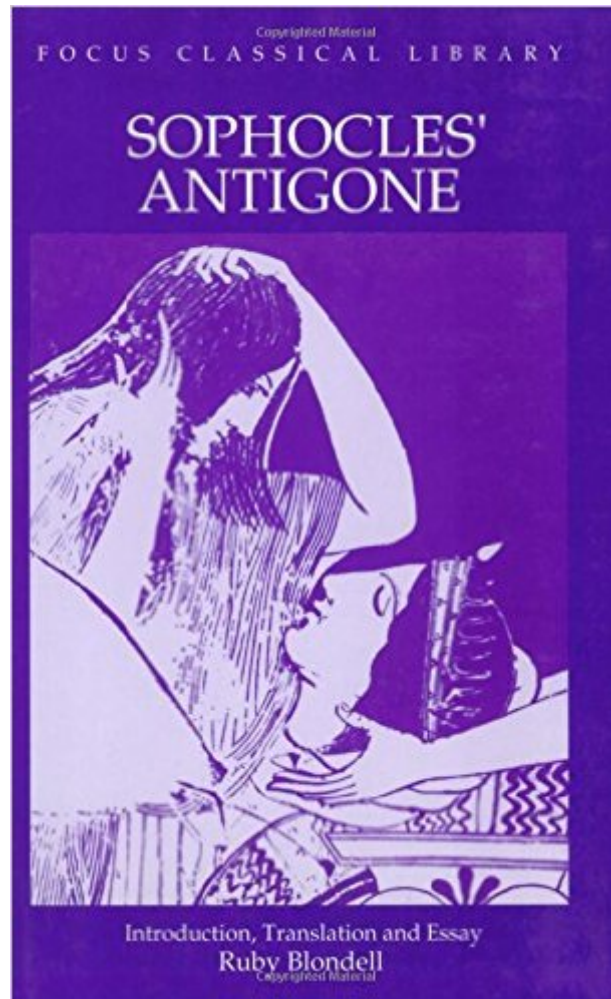


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Sophocles : Antigone (Focus Classical Library)



Synopsis

This is an English translation of Sophocles's tragedy of Antigone and her fate when she decides to bury her dead brother Polyneices. Focus Classical Library provides close translations with notes and essays to provide access to understanding Greek culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Following the ending of "Oedipus the King," Oedipus was exiled from Thebes, blind and a beggar. We learn from "Oedipus at Colonus" that his sons, Eteocles and Polyneices engaged in a civil war for the throne of Thebes (covered in "Seven Against Thebes" by Aeschylus). The two brothers kill each other and Creon, brother of Jocasta, becomes king. He orders that Eteocles, who nobly defended his city, shall receive an honorable burial, but that Polyneices, for leading the Argive invaders, shall be left unburied. This leads Antigone, sister to both of the slain brothers, to have to choose between obeying the rule of the state, the dictates of familial binds, and the will of the gods. This, of course, is the matter at the heart of this classic tragedy by Sophocles. But I have always been pleased to discover that many students, when reading "Antigone," quickly come to the conclusion that it is Creon who is the main character in the tragedy (the same way Clytemnestra is the main character in Aeschylus's "Agamemnon"). In this volume, Gita Wolf and Sirish Rao retell the story so that the title character is indeed the main character (I suspect they are borrowing more than a few ideas from Anouilh's retelling of the play in 1944 while France was occupied by the Nazis). It is too easy to see the issues of this play, first performed in the 5th century B.C., as being reflected in a host of more contemporary concerns, where the conscience of the individual conflicts with the

dictates of the state. However, it has always seemed to me that the conflict in "Antigone" is not so clear-cut as we would suppose. After all, Creon has the right to punish a traitor and to expect loyal citizens to obey. Ismene, Antigone's sister, chooses to obey, but Antigone takes a different path.

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