

**SEPTEM CONTRA
THEBAS: A TRAGEDY
OF AESCHYLUS**

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Septem Contra Thebas: A Tragedy of Aeschylus by Augustus Sachtleben

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AUGUSTUS SACHTLEBEN

**SEPTEM CONTRA
THEBAS: A TRAGEDY
OF AESCHYLUS**

SEPTEM CONTRA THEBAS,

A

TRAGEDY OF ÆSCHYLUS.

EDITED,

WITH ENGLISH NOTES, FOR THE USE OF COLLEGES,

BY

AUGUSTUS SACHTLEBEN,

PRINCIPAL OF A CLASSICAL SCHOOL IN CHARLESTON, S. C.

ὅξει Ἐρωτός
*ἔπεφνε * σὺν ἀλλολοφονίᾳ γένος ἀρχίου.*

ΠΙΝΔΑΡ.

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TO

C. C. FELTON,

PROFESSOR OF GREEK LITERATURE IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY,

THIS VOLUME

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE EDITOR.



P R E F A C E.

AMONG the mythological legends of ancient Greece, which furnished material to the Attic dramatists for their poetical compositions, there was none of a more truly tragical character than that of the house of Labdakus, because none exhibited on a grander scale the vicissitude of human affairs, as the result of that conflict between individual freedom and a higher necessity, which constitutes the chief element of all tragedy among the ancients. Hence it is that the misfortunes of Laius and his descendants formed one of the favorite subjects for representation on the Athenian stage. All the great dramatists of whom we have any account handled the subject with more or less success, and some of the finest specimens of dramatic poetry which have come down to our times treat of the fate of the royal house of Thebes.

Whilst we possess, in the *Antigone* and the *Œdipus Rex* and *Coloneus*, three entire tragedies of Sophocles on the history of the Labdakidæ, there remain to us, with the exception of the "Seven against Thebes," only the names and

λαβὼν αὐτὸν ἐπιμελείας ἤξιωσε καὶ εἰς ἀνδρῶν ἡλικίαν ἤγαγεν, ἔπειτα δὲ Οἰδίπους παρὰ τινος ὕβρισθῆναι καὶ ἀνειδισθῆναι ὡς νόθος ἐστὶ καὶ αὐτὸς γνήσιος τοῦ Πολύβου, ἀπῆλθεν ἐρωτήσεων εἰς τὴν Πυθίαν, ἦγον εἰς τὸ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος μαντεῖον, τίς τε εἶη καὶ τίνος υἱός. Εἶπε δὲ αὐτῷ τὸ μαντεῖον ὅτι πρόκειται σοὶ φοβεῦσθαι τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ μητρί σου συνευασθῆναι. Ἀκούσας δὲ τοῦ χρησμοῦ κατέλειψεν ἀπελθεῖν εἰς Κόρινθον πρὸς τὸν Πόλυβον διὰ τὰ εἰρημένα, ὡς δοκῶν τὸν Πόλυβον λέγειν τὸ χρηστήριον πατέρα καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ γυναῖκα μητέρα· καὶ ἀπῆλθε τὴν εἰς Θήβας ὁδόν. Διεπορεύετο δὲ τὴν ὁδὸν ἐκείνην καὶ ὁ Λαῖος, ὁ τούτου πατήρ, ἀπερχόμενος καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς τὸ μαντεῖον ἐρωτήσεων περὶ τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐκτεθέντος παιδός, ἦγον τοῦ Οἰδίποδος, τί γέγονε. Ἐπεὶ δὲ συνήτησαν ἀμφῶ, οἱ τοῦ Λαίου δορυφόροι πρὸς τὸν Οἰδίποδα εἶπον· παραχώρησον ἃ ξένη τῷ βασιλεῖ τῆς ὁδοῦ. Ὁ δ' οὐκ ἐπέισθη· πληγείη δὲ παρὰ τοῦ Λαίου, ἐμάνη ἐπὶ τούτῳ καὶ ἀπέκτευν αὐτὸν καὶ πάντας τοὺς μετ' αὐτοῦ· ἕνα δὲ μόνον ἀφήκεν, δε στραφεῖς οἴκου ἀπήγγειλε πάντα. Ἐλθὼν δὲ εἰς Θήβας ὁ Οἰδίπους ὑστερον εὔρε κακὸν αὐτοῖς ἐπικείμενον μέγα, τὴν Σφίγγα· ἥτις αἰνίγματα ἔλεγε καὶ τὸν μὴ ἰσχύοντα λύσαι αὐτὰ κατήσθιε· Προέκειτο δὲ τότε παρὰ τῶν Θηβαίων τῷ εὐρόντι τὸ αἶνιγμα τῆς Σφίγγος βραβεῖον ἢ τοῦ Λαίου γυνὴ Ἰοκάστη, δοθησομένη αὐτῷ εἰς γάμον. Εἰπούσης οὖν τῆς Σφίγγος τὸ αἶνιγμα τὸ, τετράπους δίπους τε καὶ πάλιν τρίπους, ὃ σημαίνει τὸν ἀνθρωπον, ἐφέυρε τούτο ὁ Οἰδίπους· ἢ δὲ Σφίγξ μανείσα ἀνείλεν αὐτήν. Συνελθὼν οὖν ὁ Οἰδίπους τῇ ἰδίᾳ μητρὶ παῖδας ἐποίησε τέσσαρας, τὸν Πολυνεῖκην καὶ τὸν Ἐτεοκλῆν, τὴν Ἀρτεγύνην καὶ τὴν Ἰσμήνην. Ὑστερον δὲ μαθὼν τὸ ἀνόμημα ὃ ἔδρασεν ἐτόφλωσεν ἑαυτὸν, τοῖς δὲ εἰρημένους υἱοῖς αὐτοῦ τὴν βασιλείαν κατέλειψεν. Ἐπεὶ δὲ οὗτοι τοῦτον ἔστα τυφλὸν ἐν οἰκίσκῳ καθεῖρξαν, κατηράσατο αὐτοὺς ὥστε διὰ ξίφους καὶ πολέμου τὴν βασιλείαν διαμερίσασθαι. Οὐ ἔνεκα καὶ φοβούμενοι τὸ ὁμοῦ μὲν εἶναι ἐν ταῖς Θήβαις καὶ βασιλεύειν κατέλειψαν· συμπεφωθήκασιν δὲ ἵνα τοῦ ἐνὸς ἐξερχομένου τῆς πόλεως καὶ ἀποδημοῦντος ἐπὶ χρόνον ἕνα ὁ ἕτερος βασιλεύει, καὶ πάλιν τοῦ ἀποδημοῦντος εἰσερχομένου ὑποχωροῖ ὁ ἕτερος, ὡς ἂν ἐκ τούτου φύγῃσι τὴν ἀράν. Ὁ γοῦν Πολυνεῖκης πρῶτος ὢν ἐκρά-

τησεν ἐν χρόνῳ ἐνὶ τῆς βασιλείας, εἴτα ἐξῆλθε τῷ Ἐτεοκλεί παραχωρήσας αὐτῆς. Τοῦ χρόνου δὲ συμπληρωθέντος ἐπὶ τὸ βασιλεύειν ὁ Πολυνείκης καὶ αὐθις εἰς τὰς Θήβας παρεγένετο κατὰ τὸ συμπεφωνημένον· μὴ παραδεχθεὶς δὲ ὑπὸ Ἐτεοκλέους εἰς τὸν τοῦ Ἄργου βασιλεία Ἄδραστον ἀπῆλθε, καὶ τοῦτου γαμβρὸς ἐπὶ θυγατρὶ γέγονεν, ἐπὶ ὑποσχέσει τοιαύτῃ, ἵνα συνεργήσῃ αὐτῷ ὁ Ἄδραστος ἐπανελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν, καὶ βασιλείας δράσασθαι. Λαβὼν τοίνυν ἐκ τοῦ Ἄργου στρατιὰν πλείστην ἄπεισιν εἰς Θήβας κατὰ τοῦ οἰκείου ἀδελφοῦ. Ἐνθα καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἐφονεύθησαν.

Ἡ μὲν οὖν σκηνὴ τοῦ δράματος ἐν Θήβαις ὑπόκειται· ὁ δὲ χορὸς ἐκ Θηβαίων ἐστὶ παρθένων· ἡ δὲ ὑπόθεσις, στρατιὰ Ἀργείων πολιορκούσα Θηβαίους, τοὺς καὶ νικῆσαντας· καὶ θάνατος Ἐτεοκλέους καὶ Πολυνείκους. Ἐπιγέγραπται δὲ ὑπόθεσις τῶν ἐπτά ἐπὶ Θήβας, διὰ τὸ ἐπτά στρατηγούς φυλάσσειν τὰς πύλας τῶν Θηβῶν. Εἰσὶ δὲ αὐταὶ αἱ Θῆβαι ἐπτάπυλοι· αἱ δὲ ἐν τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ οὖσαι ἑκατοντάπυλοι.

Προλογίζει δὲ Ἐτεοκλῆς, παρασκευάζων τὸν τῶν Θηβαίων δῆμον εἰς φρουρὰν τῆς πόλεως.

Α Α Α Ω Σ .

Οἰδίπους μαθὼν ὡς ἀθέσμως συνῆν τῇ μητρὶ ἐτύφλωσεν ἑαυτόν· οἱ δὲ παῖδες αὐτοῦ Ἐτεοκλῆς καὶ Πολυνείκης, θέλοντες λήθῃ παραπέμψαι τὸ τοιαῦτον μίσημα, ἐγκατακλείουσιν οἰκίσκῳ αὐτόν. Ὁ δὲ τοῦτο μὴ φέρων ἀρᾶται αὐτοῖς διὰ σιδήρου τὴν βασιλείαν λαχεῖν. Οἱ δὲ εἰς φόβον πεπτωκότες ἐπαύθη μὴ τὰς ἀρὰς τελέσωσιν οἱ θεοὶ. Ἔγνωσαν δεῖν ἔχασθαι τὴν βασιλείαν χωρὰ μέρος, ἕκαστος ἐνιαυτὸν ἄρχων. Πρῶτον οὖν Ἐτεοκλῆς ἤρξεν, ἄτε καὶ πρεσβύτερος ὢν Πολυνείκους, εἰ καὶ Σοφοκλῆς νεώτερον λέγει. Πολυνείκης δὲ ὑπεχώρησε. Τελεσθέντος δὲ τοῦ συγκεκριμένου ἐνιαυτοῦ, ἐπειδὴ Πολυνείκης ἐλθὼν ἀπῆτει τὸ σκῆπτρον, οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἔλαβεν, ἀλλὰ