

**AN ABRIDGED ENGLISH  
VERSION OF SOPHOCLES'  
ŒDIPUS AT COLONOS**

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An abridged English version of Sophocles' *Œdipus at Colonus* by William Bartholomew

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**WILLIAM BARTHOLOMEW**

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VERSION OF SOPHOCLES'  
ŒDIPUS AT COLONOS**



AN ABRIDGED  
ENGLISH VERSION  
OF  
SOPHOCLES'  
ŒDIPUS AT COLŒNOS;

WRITTEN AND ADAPTED FOR

HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,

**Queen Victoria;**

AND

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS,

**Prince Albert;**

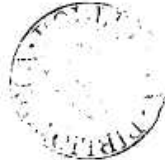
BY

WILLIAM BARTHOLOMEW,

TO THE MUSIC OF

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

*First performed in England at Buckingham Palace,  
February 10, 1848.*



PERSONS.

ŒDIPUS, *the banished King of Thebes.*

ANTIGONE,  
ISMENE, } *his Daughters.*

POLYNICES, *his eldest Son.*

CRON.

THISEUS, *King of Athens.*

A CITIZEN OF COLONOS.

A MESSENGER.

CHORUS. *Aged Citizens of Colonos.*

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The Action occurs at the entrance of the Grove of the Furies ;  
near Athens.

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## ŒDIPUS AT COLONOS.

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*Enter ŒDIPUS led by ANTIGONE.*

ŒDIPUS.

Where are we now, Antigone? look round,  
See for thy dark old sire, if any here  
Will yield an alms to soothe the desolate,  
Forsaken, wandering outcast, Œdipus!  
Few are my wants, and little will suffice them;  
For years of woe have taught my soul to bear  
Calamity with resignation. Find me,  
My child, some hallowed, or unhallowed seat,  
Where I may rest my aged tottering limbs,  
Till some one passing, tell us where we wait  
To learn and do the rites that custom claims.

ANTIGONE.

Dear and long-suffering father! distant appears  
A noble city crowned with lofty towers:  
And here, a stately grove of laurels, bays,  
And olives twined with vines; where fluttering quires  
Of nightingales turn silence into song.  
Come, sit on this unhewn fragment: for one,  
So old and wayworn, surely needs repose.

ŒDIPUS.

Gently! remember I am blind.

ANTIGONE.

I do:

Alas! thy helplessness too oft reminds me.

ŒDIPUS.

But where are we ?

ANTIGONE.

I judge, near Athens.

ŒDIPUS.

Go and inquire.

ANTIGONE.

For this, I need not leave thee : here cometh one  
Who may perchance, inform us.

*Enter a COLONEAN.*

ŒDIPUS.

Friend ; I learn

From her through whom I see, that I may ask—

COLONEAN.

Not where thou sittest ; for thy feet profane  
A sacred spot.

ŒDIPUS.

Sacred ! to whom ?

COLONEAN.

The dread

Stern Goddesses who sprang from Earth and Chaos.

ŒDIPUS.

I would invoke them by their names in prayer.

COLONEAN.

The prescient Eumenidæ we call them ;  
Though others worship them by other titles.

ŒDIPUS.

O, may they heed my humble supplication !—  
Then will their sacred haunt henceforth be mine.

COLONEAN.

What words are these ?

ŒDIPUS.

Omens of destiny.



COLONEAN.

If so ; I dare not urge thee hence, but by  
Our city's mandate.

ŒDIPUS.

Oh, seek it not : but deign  
To aid a wandering exile's prayer !

COLONEAN.

What wouldst thou ?

ŒDIPUS.

Say, where am I ?

COLONEAN.

This hill equestrian,  
Crowneth the brazen way that guardeth Athens.  
Majestic Neptune, with Prometheus  
The Titan—he who brought celestial fire  
To earth,—here sanctify the spot. Its plains  
Around, and people, are Colonean.

ŒDIPUS.

Who governs them ?

COLONEAN.

Great Theseus, the heir  
Of Ægeus, now is king.

ŒDIPUS.

Would any here  
Entreat him hither ?

COLONEAN.

To what intent ? explain.

ŒDIPUS.

His aiding me, may prove great gain to him.

COLONEAN.

How so ? through thee, whose eyes are dark ?

ŒDIPUS.

My words  
Are all perceptive.

COLONEAN.

Err not through blind conceit.  
 Yet, noble bearing dignifies thy garb ;  
 And Fortune may have wronged thee : so remain,  
 Till I return with tidings for thy guidance.

*Exit COLONEAN.*

ŒDIPUS.

Child ; is he gone ?

ANTIGONE.

We are again alone.

ŒDIPUS.

Ye Deities revered, within whose grove,  
 My weary limbs repose ; be gracious now  
 To me, and Phœbus,—who by oracle  
 Foretold the sequent woes that bring me here  
 To end a life, that brandeth them with shame,  
 Who cast me forth to roam ; and crowneth them  
 Who may protect and shelter me, with glory.  
 Signs, he declared should be displayed in peals  
 And flashes from above, shaking the earth,  
 As harbingers of my approaching end.  
 Nor doubt I the event ; since hither led,  
 Pure and unstained by wine—which you abhor,—  
 I rest now on this fragment unprofaned  
 By human craft. Deign then, ye Goddesses,  
 To turn Apollo's prescient words to deeds ;  
 And end a life of woes,—unless it be  
 My fate to suffer others ere I die !

ANTIGONE.

Cease ; for a group of aged men approach,—  
 Perchance, to gaze on thee.

ŒDIPUS.

If so ; remove me.

Secluded in the grove, we there may learn  
 New motives for discretion.

*They retire within the grove.*

*Enter CHORUS.*

STROPHE 1.

CHORUS.

Behold !  
 He is gone ! seek him, search,  
 Find the intruder that here profanely tarried ;  
 The bold, impious, shameless man !  
 Look round on every side,  
 Inquiring, call aloud !  
 Some wandering wretch  
 Hither is lurking :  
 None but a stranger would venture here,  
 Thus provoking their dreadful ire,  
 Their's—the maidens who haunt this grove,  
 Their's—whom we fear to name.  
 Awe-stricken, we with eyes averted,  
 On, in silent devotion, pass ;  
 Scarcely voicing the prayer we breathe.  
 We now learn that a man here cometh,  
 Of our laws regardless :  
 We pry into all the recesses around,  
 To discover him :  
 But alas, our search is eluded !

*ŒDIPUS and ANTIGONE appear.*

ŒDIPUS.

See him here ! I perceive by your words,  
 Ye are seeking for me.

CHORUS.

Alas, alas !

His voice and his aspect fill me with dread !

ŒDIPUS.

Do not deem me a scorner of you, or your laws.

CHORUS.

Who, all-aiding Jove, is this aged man ?