

Sophocles with sufficient fidelity to heighten the contrast between the original and the rhetorical transcript. For the comparative student of drama, however, the Roman piece is by no means devoid of instruction or of interest. Seneca's plot diverges from that of Sophocles in three main points. (i) Teiresias does not intuitively know the murderer of Laïus. When his aid is invoked by Oedipus, he has recourse to the arts of divination. Manto, the daughter of the blind seer, reports the signs to him, and he declares that neither voice of birds nor inspection of victims can reveal the name. Laïus himself must be called up from the shades. In a grove near Thebes, Teiresias performs the awful rites which evoke the dead; the ghastly shape of Laïus rises—

Stetit per artus sanguine effuso horridus—

and denounces his son. This scene is related to Oedipus by Creon in a long and highly-wrought speech (530—658). Here, as in the earlier scene with Manto (303—402), copious use is made of detail from Roman augural lore, as well as of the Nekyia in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*—suggesting a contrast with the lightness of touch which marks that passage of the Sophoclean *Antigone* (998—1011) where Teiresias describes the failure of his appeal to augury. There, the technical signs are briefly but vividly indicated; in Seneca, the erudition is heavy and obtrusive.

(ii) After the discovery of the parricide and the incest, and when Oedipus has now blinded himself, Iocasta meets and thus accosts him:—

Quid te vocem?

Natumne? dubitas? natus es, natum pudet.

Invite, loquere, nate: quo avertis caput

Vacuosque vultus?

*Oed.* Quis frui et tenebris vetat?

Quis reddit oculos? matris, heu, matris sonus.

Perdidimus operam. Congredi fas amplius

Haud est. Nefandos dividat vastum mare...

Iocasta presently kills herself on the stage. Here, at least, Seneca has the advantage of Euripides, whose Iocasta speaks