

latest words, Antigone expresses her confidence in the love which awaits her beyond the grave; and also the trouble which overclouds her trust in the gods, who knew her deed, and yet have permitted her to suffer this doom. Then she is led forth, and is seen no more.

Fourth  
stasimon:  
944—987.

The rocky tomb to which she is passing suggests the theme of a choral ode, commemorating three other sufferers of a cruel imprisonment,—Danaë, Lycurgus, and Cleopatra.

VI. Fifth  
episode:  
988—  
1114.

As the choral strains cease, the blind and aged prophet Teiresias is led in by a boy. He comes with an urgent warning for the king. The gods are wroth with Thebes; they will no longer give their prophet any sign by the voice of birds, or through the omens of sacrifice. The king is himself the cause, by his edict. Carrion-creatures have defiled the altars of Thebes with the taint of the unburied dead. Let burial-rites be at once paid to Polyneices. He speaks for Creon's own good.

X Here we pause for a moment to answer a question which naturally occurs to the modern reader. Why is Polyneices said to be still unburied? Has not Antigone already rendered burial-rites to him; is it not precisely for that action that she is dying? Antigone had, indeed, given symbolical sepulture to Polyneices by sprinkling dust upon the corpse, and pouring libations. The performance of that act discharged her personal duty towards the dead and the gods below; it also saved her dead brother from the dishonour (which would else have been a reproach to him in the other world) of having been neglected by his nearest kinsfolk on earth. But Antigone's act did not clear Creon. Creon's duty to the dead and to the gods below was still unperformed. So far as Creon was concerned, Polyneices was still unburied. And Creon's obligation could not be discharged, as Antigone's had been, merely by the symbolical act, which religion accepted only when a person was unavoidably hindered from performing regular rites. There was nothing to hinder Creon from performing such rites. These were still claimed from him. After Antigone's tribute had been rendered, birds and dogs had been busy with the corpse. Creon's duty to the dead and to the gods below was now also a duty