

ten strategi was held annually, at the same time as the other official elections (*ἀρχαιρεσίαι*), in the month of Thargelion, at the beginning of the ninth prytany of the civic year. Further, we may conclude that the *Antigone* had not been produced at any long interval before May, 441 B.C. Otherwise the tradition that the play had influenced the election—whether it really did so or not—would not have seemed probable.

Assuming, then, that the *Antigone* was brought out not long before Sophocles obtained the strategia, we have still to consider whether there is any likelihood in the story that his election was influenced by the success of the play. At first sight, a modern reader is apt to be reminded of the man of letters who, in the opinion of his admirer, would have been competent, at the shortest notice, to assume command of the Channel Fleet. It may appear grotesque that an important State should have rewarded poetical genius by a similar appointment. But here, as in other cases, we must endeavour to place ourselves at the old Athenian point of view. The word 'general,' by which we render 'strategus,' suggests functions purely military, requiring, for their proper discharge, an elaborate professional training. Such a conception of the Athenian strategia would not, however, be accurate. The ten strategi, chosen annually, formed a board of which the duties were primarily military, but also, in part, civil. And, for the majority of the ten, the military duties were usually restricted to the exercise of control and supervision at Athens. They resembled officials at the War Office, with some added functions from the province of the Home Office. The number of strategi sent out with an army or a fleet was, at this period, seldom more than three. It was only in grave emergencies that all the ten strategi went on active service together. In May, 441 B.C.,—the time, as it seems, when Sophocles was elected,—no one could have foreseen the great crisis at Samos. In an ordinary year Sophocles, as one of the strategi, would not necessarily have been required to leave Athens. Among his nine colleagues there were doubtless, besides Pericles, one or two more possessed of military aptitudes, who would have sufficed to perform any ordinary service in the field. Demosthenes—in whose day only one of the ten strategi was ordinarily commis-