

# **Antigone**

## ***Background Information***



# Sophocles- Greek Playwright

- ◆ **Born in 496 BC in Colonus, Greece (near Athens)- died at age 90 (406 BC)**
- ◆ **Wrote over 100 plays**
  - ◆ **Only 7 remain**
- ◆ **At age 28, one of his plays won a contest**
  - ◆ **Won over 20 times in his life and never placed lower than 2nd**
  - ◆ **Defeated Aeschylus in that competition**
  - ◆ **Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles are the masters of Greek tragedy and wrote during the “Golden Age” or ancient Greece**
- ◆ **Added a third actor to his plays and more elaborate scenery**

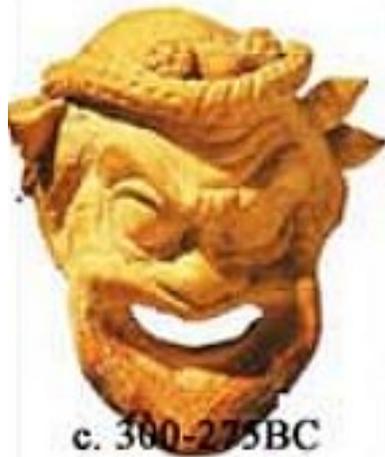
# Tragedy

- ◆ **Tragic plays involve the downfall of the hero**
  - ◆ **Usually ends with the hero's destruction**
- ◆ **Involves intense emotion that leads to a *catharsis* or emotional release**
- ◆ **According to Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher :**
  - ◆ **Tragedy arouses the emotions of pity, fear, wonder and awe**
  - ◆ **A tragic hero must be capable of great suffering**
  - ◆ **Tragedy explores the questions of the ways of the gods to mortals**
  - ◆ **Tragedy purifies the emotions (*catharsis*)**
  - ◆ **Tragedy shows how the hero is brought to disaster because of a single flaw in *their* character**

# Greek Theater

- ◆ **Tragedies were produced as part of a religious festival to Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility**
  - ◆ **Awards were given to the playwright who presented the best series of 3 plays**
- ◆ **Plays were performed in amphitheaters that seated 40,000**
- ◆ **The stage was on the foot of a hill on a raised platform**
- ◆ **The *skene* was a large building behind the stage that served as a backdrop and housed the dressing room**
- ◆ **The *orchestra* was a circular floor located between the skene and the audience**
- ◆ **All actors were men**
  - ◆ **Wore masks with built-in megaphones**
  - ◆ **Wore platform shoes and long robes**

# Greek Masks



1st-2nd Century AD



# More Greek Theater

- ◆ **Stage was a raised platform and actors moved in a bold and definite manner**
- ◆ **CHORUS: group of 15, acted as one character, moved and sang together**
  - ◆ **Set the mood, sometimes sided with one character, warned of danger**
  - ◆ **CHORAGUS: the leader of the chorus who interacts with the characters in the play**
- ◆ **No scene changes, no complicated subjects**
- ◆ **No physical horror or violence took place onstage**
  - ◆ **Messengers told the audience what happened**
- ◆ **Audience often knew the story ahead of time and came to see the emotion of the characters**

# Antigone's Family & Background

- ◆ **Antigone is one of series of 3 plays: *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus* complete the trilogy**
- ◆ **All 3 deal with the curse of Oedipus and how it affects his family for generations**
- ◆ **Curse:**
  - ◆ **Prophecy to the king and queen of Thebes that their son will kill his father and marry his mother**
- ◆ **“Oedipus Complex”**

# Parts of the Play

- ◆ **Prologue**: beginning of the play, before the action occurs
- ◆ **Parodos**: song that marks the entry of the chorus
- ◆ **Scene**: where the majority of the action of the play takes place
- ◆ **Ode**: song that is chanted by the chorus, often is a commentary on the action from the scene. Sometimes the Ode is a comparison to the actions of the gods or historical figures
- ◆ **Paeon**: hymn sung by the chorus, appealing to the gods for assistance
- ◆ **Exodos**: last episode in the play. It is followed by a final speech addressed directly to the audience by the