

IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME!



ORIGINS OF GREEK THEATRE

- BEGAN IN THE 6TH CENTURY BCE IN ATHENS
- TRAGEDY (TRAGOIDA) COMES FROM THE GREEK AND MEANS GOAT SONG, GOATS WERE SACRIFICED TO THE GOD DIONYSUS BEFORE PERFORMANCES



- THESPIS WAS THOUGHT TO BE THE 1ST ACTOR, THEREFORE 'THESPIAN'
- ATHENIANS SPREAD FESTIVALS TO ALLIES TO PROMOTE A COMMON IDENTITY
- DITHYRAMB = FORMALISED NARRATIVE SONG, SUNG BY A CHORUS

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE GREEK CHORUS?

- A GROUP OF 12 TO 50 PLAYERS
- SPOKE OR SANG THEIR LINES IN UNISON
- LARGE GROUP MOVEMENTS
- WORE MASKS
- FUNCTIONED AS ONE ACTOR
- PROVIDE BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE AUDIENCE TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS GOING ON
- COMMENTED ON THEMES
- EXPRESSED WHAT THE MAIN CHARACTERS COULDN'T SAY (LIKE SECRETS, THOUGHTS, AND FEARS)
- PROVIDED OTHER CHARACTERS WITH INFORMATION AND INSIGHTS



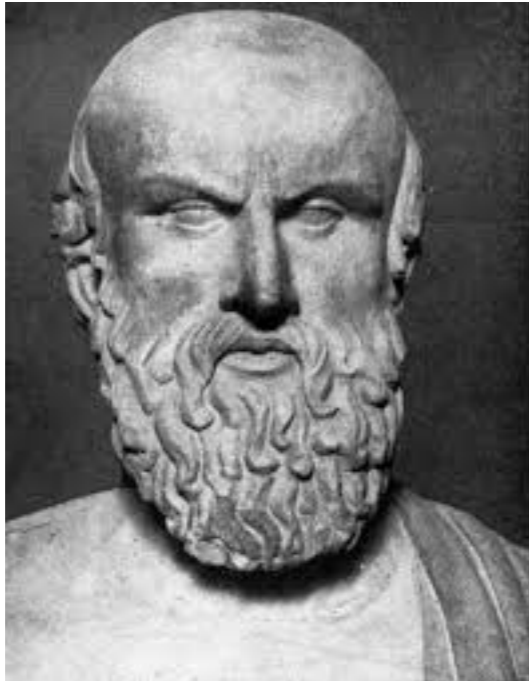
EVENTUALLY OEDIPUS CAME TO THE GATES OF THE CITY OF THEBES. GUARDING THE GATES WAS A TERRIBLE MONSTER WITH THE BODY OF A LION, THE HEAD OF A WOMAN, WINGS OF AN EAGLE AND THE TAIL OF A SNAKE. THIS CREATURE ALLOWED NO ONE TO ENTER OR LEAVE THE CITY WITHOUT ANSWERING THE RIDDLE THAT SHE POSED. IF THE TRAVELLER COULD NOT ANSWER CORRECTLY, SHE WOULD KILL AND EAT HIM. NO ONE HAD YET COME UP WITH THE RIGHT ANSWER, SO THE CREATURE, KNOWN AS THE SPHINX WAS WELL-FED, AND THE CITY OF THEBES WAS CUT OFF FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD AS NO ONE COULD GET IN AND NO ONE COULD GET OUT.

STAND THERE IF YOU
VALUE YOUR LIFE AND
TELL ME THIS: WHAT
CREATURE HAS FOUR
LEGS IN THE MORNING,
TWO LEGS IN THE
AFTERNOON AND THREE
LEGS IN THE EVENING?

WRITE AND PRESENT A GREEK CHORUS PIECE THAT NARRATES THE ACTIONS OF A MUNDANE ACTIVITY. YOU MUST WRITE AT LEAST SIX FULL SENTENCES IN MODERN LANGUAGE OR A MORE POETIC STYLE. WHATEVER STYLE YOU CHOOSE, TRY TO BE EXTREMELY DETAILED AND DESCRIPTIVE.

MORNING TIME, AND SARAH AWAKES!
SHE OPENS HER EYES AND RUBS OUT
THE SLEEP OF A DREAMLESS NIGHT.
SLOWLY, SLOWLY SHE RISES FROM HER BED
AND STUMBLES TO YONDER BATHROOM.
REACHING DELIBERATELY TOWARDS THE
TOOTHBRUSH
THAT PROMISES CLEAN TEETH THAT RESEMBLE
WHITE PEARLS.
TOOTHPASTE, WITH CLAIMS OF MINTY FRESHNESS
IS SPREAD UPON THE BRISTLES IN HAPHAZARD
FASHION.
ONE BY ONE, CLEANSING FOAM ENVELOPS EACH
TOOTH.
A RINSE OF CLEAR, COOL WATER
AND SARAH IS NEARLY READY TO FACE THE DAY.

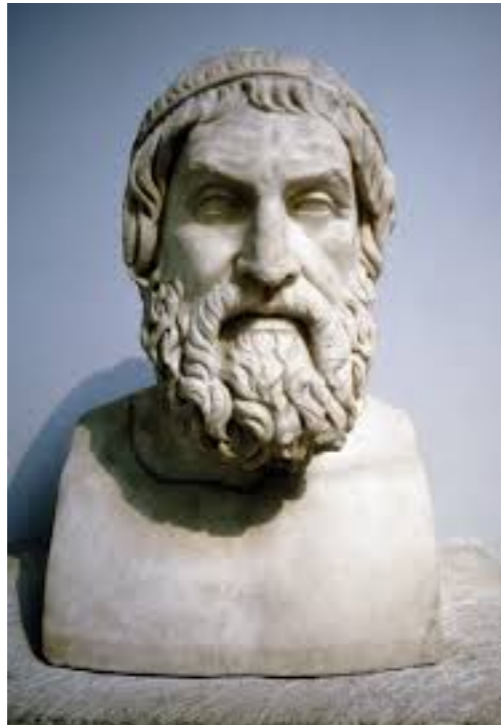
AESCHYLUS C. 525–456 BC



- OFTEN DESCRIBED AS THE FATHER OF TRAGEDY.
- ACCORDING TO ARISTOTLE, HE EXPANDED THE NUMBER OF CHARACTERS IN THE THEATRE AND ALLOWED CONFLICT AMONG THEM; CHARACTERS PREVIOUSLY HAD INTERACTED ONLY WITH THE CHORUS.
- FIRST DRAMATIST TO PRESENT A TRILOGY - THE ORESTEIA
- PERSIANS - ONE OF ONLY GREEK TRAGEDIES TO PORTRAY CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
- 'EVEN IN OUR SLEEP, PAIN WHICH CANNOT FORGET FALLS DROP BY DROP UPON THE HEART, UNTIL IN OUR OWN DESPAIR, AGAINST OUR WILL, COMES WISDOM THROUGH THE AWFUL GRACE OF GOD.'
- "TO TAME THE SAVAGENESS OF MAN AND MAKE GENTLE THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD."

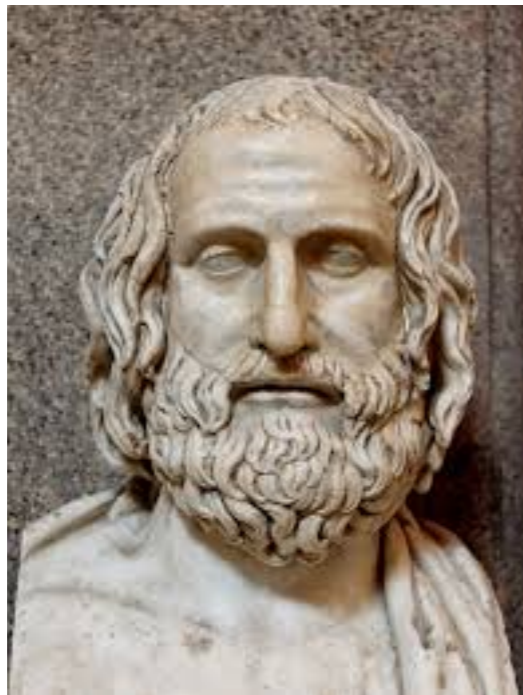
- WROTE OVER 120 PLAYS, 7 SURVIVED
- WON 24 DRAMATIC COMPETITIONS OUT OF 30, NEVER LOWER THAN 2ND PLACE, AESCHYLUS WON 13

SOPHOCLES (C. 495-406 BC)



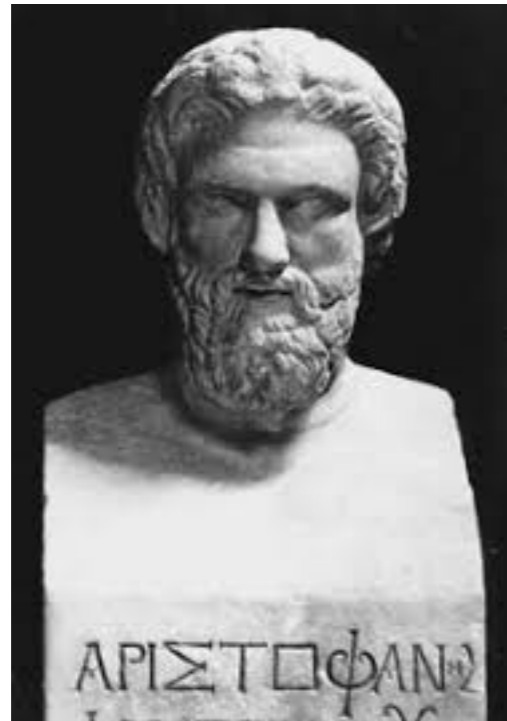
- ADDED A THIRD ACTOR, REDUCING IMPORTANCE OF CHORUS
- GREATER CHARACTERISATION
- THEBAN PLAYS, ALTHOUGH EACH WAS PART OF A TETRALOGY
- OEDIPUS REX, ANTIGONE, ELECTRA
- 'WITHOUT LABOR NOTHING PROSPERS.'
- 'LOOK AND YOU WILL FIND IT - WHAT IS UNSOUGHT WILL GO UNDETECTED.'
- 'ONE WORD FREES US OF ALL THE WEIGHT AND PAIN OF LIFE: THAT WORD IS LOVE.'

EURIPIDES C. 480–406 BC



- 90-ODD PLAYS, 18 OR 19 SURVIVED
- PRESENTED MYTHICAL HEROES AS ORDINARY PEOPLE IN EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES
- FOCUSED ON INNER LIVES AND MOTIVES OF CHARACTERS
- MEDEA, IPHIGENIA IN AULIS, BACCHAE, ORESTES, THE TROJAN WOMEN
- WHEN LOVE IS IN EXCESS IT BRINGS A MAN NO HONOR NOR WORTHINESS.
- WHEN A GOOD MAN IS HURT, ALL WHO WOULD BE CALLED GOOD MUST SUFFER WITH HIM.
- JUDGE A TREE FROM ITS FRUIT; NOT FROM THE LEAVES.

ARISTOPHANES C. 446 – C. 386 BC



- COMIC PLAYWRIGHT - 11 OF 40 PLAYS SURVIVE
- THE FATHER OF COMEDY
- SAID TO RECREATE LIFE MORE CONVINCINGLY
- RIDICULED AND CARICATURED - DENOUNCED AS SLANDER
- POETIC APPROACH - IAMBIC DIALOGUE AND LYRICS
- LYSISTRATA, THE FROGS, WEALTH
- "YOUTH AGES, IMMATURITY IS OUTGROWN, IGNORANCE CAN BE EDUCATED, AND DRUNKENNESS SOBERED, BUT STUPID LASTS FOREVER."
- "OPEN YOUR MIND BEFORE YOUR MOUTH"
- "UNDER EVERY STONE LURKS A POLITICIAN."

MASKS



- ENABLED AUDIENCE TO SEE EXPRESSIONS FROM FAR AWAY
- DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN COMEDY AND TRAGEDY
- PART OF THE PROCESS OF BECOMING THE CHARACTER
- ACTORS COULD CHANGE CHARACTERS BY CHANGING MASKS
- MEN COULD PLAY WOMEN
- UNIFY CHORUS
- SOME WORKED AS MINI MEGAPHONES