forces to sacrifice POLYXENA to honor the dead Achilles (Hec. 304–5; see also HUMAN SACRIFICE) and to hurl the toddler Astyanax from Troy’s walls (Tro. 721–5). In the few lines he speaks in Hecuba, he demands that Hecuba give up her daughter and coldly rebuffs her pleas for the girl’s life, even as he admits that Hecuba had saved his own life in the past (239–50, see also GRATITUDE/INGRATITUDE). His justification that Achilles deserves a worthy sacrifice illustrates the soldier’s warped and inhuman reasoning.

*Rhesus*, based on the account of the massacre of the sleeping Thracians in Iliad 10, shows Odyseus entering the Trojan camp, warily looking for HECTOR, slaughtering Rhesus, and wounding his charioteer (565–803) only after being prodded by Athena who assures him of an easy victory. The most negative portrayal is in the SATYR PLAY Cyclops, which, consistent with its genre, depicts Odyseus as an ordinary, bumbling human being, out of touch with reality. It also shows him taking pleasure in Cruelty. Odyseus admits to being a noisy loudmouth whose crafty and deceptive speech leaves a bitter aftertaste. He stupidly tries to reason with the lawless, dim-witted Polyphemus and appeals pointlessly and sanctimoniously to values of honor and hospitality that the Cyclops could not possibly possess. He blinds the Monster even though he could get out of the cave without doing so, which is not the case in the Odyssey (Roisman 2008a; 2005a: 67–74), and describes the anticipated blinding in grisly detail that conveys his relish in the cruelty and the savagery of revenge (457–63).

References
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Oechalia In EURIPIDES (EUR. Hipp. 545; HF 473) and SOPHOCLES (Soph. Trach. 74, 354, 478, 859), Oechalia, the city of Eurytus, is in EUBOEA. However, other sources place Eurytus in THESSALY (Hom. II. 2. 730), where there was another Oechalia, and Pausanias also mentions a MESSENIAN Oechalia (Paus. 4.2–3).

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Oedipus (Οἰδίπους) The story of Oedipus, famed for solving the Sphinx’s riddle about feet and for his subsequent parricide, incest, and self-blinding, is arguably the most influential myth to survive antiquity. Among the ancients who wrote Oedipus plays are AESCHYLUS (467), SOPHOCLES (c. 429), EURIPIDES (c. 415; fragmentary), JULIUS CAESAR (first century BCE; non-extant), and SENECA (first century CE). This article focuses on four topics: Oedipus’ name, Sophocles’ Oedipus plays, Euripides’ Oedipus, and the hero’s afterlife in the arts.

Name Oidi-pous means “Swollen-foot”, the name given (presumably) by his adoptive CORINTHIAN PARENTS, Polybus and Merope, because of the “swelling” (oidos) of his “feet” (pous, podos). Oedipus’ biological THEBAN PARENTS, Laius and JOCASTA, had exposed the

See also FATE AND CHANCE

References


