Version 1: Fitts and Fitzgerald Translation

**CREON:**

Gentlemen: I have the honor to inform you that our Ship of

State, which recent storms have threatened to destroy, has come

safely to harbor at last, guided by the merciful wisdom of Heaven. I

have summoned you here this morning because I know that I can

depend upon you: your devotion to King Laios was absolute; you 5

never hesitated in your duty to our late ruler Oedipus; and when

Oedipus died, your loyalty was transferred to his children.

Unfortunately, as you know, his two sons, the princes Eteocles and

Polyneices, have killed each other in battle, and I, as the next in

blood, have succeeded to the full power of the throne. 10

I am aware, of course, that no Ruler can expect complete

loyalty from his subjects until he has been tested in office.

Nevertheless, I say to you at the very outset that I have nothing but

contempt for the kind of Governor who is afraid, for whatever reason,

to follow the course that he knows is best for the State; and as for the 15

man who sets private friendship above the public welfare, ––I have

no use for him, either. I call God to witness that if I saw my country

headed for ruin, I should not be afraid to speak out plainly; and I need

hardly remind you that I would never have any dealings with an

enemy of the people. No one values friendship more highly than I; 20

but we must remember that friends made at the risk of wrecking our

Ship are not real friends at all.

These are my principles, at any rate, and that is why I have

made the following decision concerning the sons of Oedipus:

Eteocles, who died as a man should die, fighting for his country, is to 25

be buried with full military honors, with all the ceremony that is usual

when the greatest heroes die; but his brother Polyneices, who broke

his exile to come back with fire and sword against his native city and

the shrines of his fathers’ gods, whose one idea was to spill the blood

of his blood and sell his own people into slavery–– Polyneices, I say, 30

is to have no burial: no man is to touch him or say the least prayer for

him; he shall lie on the plain, unburied; and the birds and the

scavenging dogs can do with him whatever they like.

This is my command, and you can see the wisdom behind it. As

long as I am King, no traitor is going to be honored with the loyal 35

man. But whoever shows by word and deed that he is on the side of

the State,––he shall have my respect while he is living and my

reverence when he is dead.

Version 2: Thomas Translation

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| **Creon:**Gentlemen, the gods have set right againOur city’s affairs, after shaking themin a storm, and I have summoned you hereout of all the citizens, knowing wellhow you always revered the power of 5 Laius’ throne; then, both when Oedipus savedThe city and when he fell, you stood inconsistent support of their children.And so, since in the same day they both fellby twofold fate, each striking and spreading 10fratricidal pollution, now I holdsole power and the throne, because I amthe closest relative of the fallen.It is impossible to know the soul,the mind, and character of any man, 15until he has proven himself in the law. For if someone rules an entire cityand does not take hold of the best counsels, but holds his tongue out of fear, I think himto be the worst of men, now and always; 20and the man who considers more importantthan his fatherland his friend, I think himworthless. For—and may all-seeing Zeusbe my witness—I would never be silentif I saw madness creeping among 25the citizens in place of salvation,not would I consider an enemyof my country a friend to myself, | recognizing this: that my country is safety itself, and only when she is upright 30 can our sailing find friends. With laws like theseI will make our city grow. Therefore, Ihave made a decree to the citizensconcerning the sons of Oedipus:Eteocles, who fell fighting for this city, 35who earned every prize of valor, will be buried and receive all honorsthat go to the best of the dead below.His erstwhile kinsman, however, I meanPolynices, who returned from exile 40with hopes of burning his native land andancestral gods from top to bottom,wishing to feast on kindred blood and leadthe rest into slavery, it has beendecreed that in this city he shall be 45neither buried nor mourned by anyone,but everyone must leave him unburied, a feast for birds and dogs, an outrage to see.This is my judgement, and never from mewith the base take equal honor to the good; 50but whoever is friendly to this city willin life and death be equally honored by me.  |

Version 3: Braun Translation

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| **Kreon:**Gentlemen, the state!The gods have quaked her in heavy weather.Now they have righted her.The state rides steady once again.Out of all the citizens, I have summoned you, 5remembering that you blessed King Laios’ reign;when Oedipus ruled, you stood by him;and after his destruction stood by his sons,always with firm counsel.Both sons died in one day, struck and stricken, 10paired in doom and a twin pollution.Now I rule, as next of kin.They are dead; I am king.It is impossible to know a man’s soul,both the wit and will, 15before he writes laws enforces them.I believe that he who rules the stateand fails to embrace the best men’s counsels,but stays locked in silence and vague fear,is the worst man there. I have long believed so. 20And he who cherishes an individual beyond his homeland,he, I say, is nothing.Zeus who sees all will see I shall not stay silentif I see disaster marching against our citizens,and I shall not befriend the enemy of this land. 25For the state is safety.When she is steady, then we can steer.Then we can love.  | These are my principles. The state will thrive through them.Today I have proclaimed more laws akin to those.Those concern the sons of Oedipus: 30Eteokles, who fought in defence of the nationand fell in action, will be given holy burial,a funeral suited to greatness and nobility.But his brother, Polyneices, the exile, 35who descended with fire to destroy his fatherland and family gods,to drink our blood and drive us off slaves,will have no ritual, no mourners,will be left unburied so men may see himripped for food by dogs and vultures. 40This is an example of my thinking.I shall never let criminals excel good men in honor. I shall honor the friends of the statewhile they live, and when they die. |

Analyze the three translations of Creon’s speech. Look closely at the diction, syntax, figurative language, and structural choices.

What similarities exist? What differences?