

Compare two texts  
listed below



Sophocles and Capellanus Throughout history marriage and love have been important s that have brought people together and motivated others to act in various ways. We can see this not only in the ancient texts created by the Greeks, such as Sophocles, but also in the middle ages and right up until our present day. Marriage between two people can be a thing that binds them more closely together. It can also be a purely formal tie with no emotional content. Men in particular throughout history have used marriage as a political mechanism. This is true in both Oedipus the King and Capellanus Courtly Love. However, there are important differences. In Oedipus the King, Oedipus and Jocasta's marriage is one that is marked by more than immoderate affection. There appears to be love in it. For Capellanus, this breaks the rules of courtly love. The medieval Capellanus's rules regarding marriage are more formal than those belonging to the ancient Greeks. Life in the olden times was much more difficult than it is today. Relationships were not convenient and they were rarely the type of relationships that people wanted to be a part of because of desire. In fact, marriage was often performed between two people of differing tribes with the aim of bringing these people together. Tribes were united through marriage. Similarly, marriage was used for political purposes. Marrying into a family might give an individual more power. As Capellanus wrote in his book, Marriage should not be a deterrent to love. If love was what you were after, then you should find it outside of a marriage as it was not the purpose of marriage in the first place. Real love is not public and marriage is a public institution. Everywhere in a court one might expect, according to Capellanus, to find examples of hidden love. This was his contribution to mens' idea of married love. He believed there was little love in real marriage, but a lot outside of it.

Sophocles' play tells a different story. In it Oedipus comes to the throne through various complex circumstances. He marries Jocasta. Theirs is a not immoderate love. This is an important facet of the play as it sharpens the irony of what comes next. It is revealed that Jocasta is Oedipus's mother. The love that they shared was an illicit, incestuous one. No one was ennobled from it, but it was nonetheless true. That is why it was so terrible and why Jocasta hangs herself and Oedipus puts out his eyes. Their love was effectively a crime. Oedipus would have done well to listen to Capellanus' advice and find love outside of the formality of his marriage. But it appears that Oedipus is too honour bound for that solution. Marriage and love are complex institutions that both Capellanus and Sophocles think deeply about in their work. Both have slightly different versions of how men approach these institutions and what motivates them to act. In today's world we appear to lean more closely in the direction of Sophocles than Capellanus. Work consulted Johnson, Marguerite & Terry Ryan. *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Society and Literature: a Sourcebook*. Routledge, 2005. Monson, Don. *Andreas Capellanus, Scholasticism, and the Courtly Tradition*. Washington, D. C., 2005.