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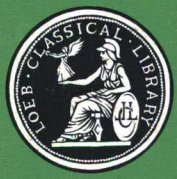

Edited and Translated by

HUGH LLOYD-JONES

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SOPHOCLES

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PREFACE

By kind permission of the Oxford University Press, the text of Sophocles printed in these volumes is virtually the same as that of the text edited by me in collaboration with N. G. Wilson, which was published as an Oxford Classical Text in 1990 and reprinted, with a few corrections, in 1992. It is virtually the same, and not quite the same, because in this edition I have sometimes put an emendation in the text where the Oxford text had a crux, and because in a few places I have changed my opinion.

My translation has no literary pretensions, being intended as an aid to those who wish to understand the Greek text that is printed opposite. At the same time as the Oxford text, Nigel Wilson and I brought out a book called *Sophoclea: Studies in the Text of Sophocles*, in which we explained the reasons for some of our editorial decisions.

I would like to thank the Editor and the Trustee of the Loeb Classical Library, Professors George Goold and Zeph Stewart, and also Margaretta Fulton, of the Harvard University Press, for the considerable assistance that I have received from them. Nigel Wilson has not only allowed our joint work to be utilised for this edition, but

has added to my obligation to him by correcting the proofs.

Hugh Lloyd-Jones

Wellesley, Massachusetts
28 June 1993

NOTE TO SECOND PRINTING

The need for a new printing has enabled me to make a number of corrections as well as alterations, most of which the reader will find explained in H. Lloyd-Jones and N. G. Wilson, *Sophocles: Second Thoughts* (Hypomnemata 100), Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1997.

H. Ll.-J.

10 March 1997

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INTRODUCTION

Many modern readers of Greek tragedy seem to feel a special affinity with Sophocles, and it is worth while to endeavor to account for this.

The notion that each tragedy has a single hero from whose standpoint the whole action should be viewed is a mistake. But each surviving Sophoclean tragedy contains at least one heroic figure, at least one character whose strength, courage, and intelligence exceed the human norm. In a dire crisis only such persons as these can protect common human beings; yet they suffer, to use a French expression, from the defects of their qualities, being proud, obstinate, and irascible. In each surviving play, such characters come into conflict with the order of the universe, and suffer in consequence. Some modern scholars insist that the divine government of the universe is necessarily just, and that the heroes must learn wisdom by suffering; others hold that the poet's sympathy is with the heroes as they defy unjust and arbitrary gods. R. P. Winnington-Ingram, in his excellent study of the complete plays, calls the former group "the pietists" and the latter "the hero-worshippers."

The Women of Trachis presents the end of the life on earth of the greatest of Greek heroes, Heracles. Although he is Heracles' father, Zeus punishes him for his ruthless behaviour towards the family and city of Eurytus, for

whose daughter Iole he has conceived a fatal passion. The brutality of Heracles, and in particular his unfeeling conduct towards his wife Deianeira, who is portrayed with great delicacy and sympathy, is unsparingly presented (as is his greatness and his service to mankind); Zeus punishes him for it, yet his agonising death will be followed by apotheosis, as the text clearly indicates.

Antigone is another heroic character, skilfully contrasted with her sister Ismene, who without being heroic does not lack courage or affection. Antigone's defiance of Creon's edict forbidding the burial of her brother has never failed to win the admiration of audiences and readers. But Antigone, like Heracles, has the defects that go with her heroic qualities; her obstinate refusal to compromise and her fatal impetuosity make the final catastrophe worse than it need have been. We are several times reminded that the daughter of Oedipus lies under the curse upon the house of Laius.

The murderous and treacherous attack upon the Greek chieftains to which Ajax is impelled by the award of the arms of the dead Achilles to Odysseus is by no means extenuated by the poet, and the harshness of the hero's character is never minimised; he treats Tecmessa no more considerately than Heracles treats Deianeira. But the poet presents with deep sympathy the greatness of the hero and the clear-sighted courage with which he realises that he must kill himself if he is not to renounce the proud conception of honour which is central to his life. He is contrasted with Odysseus, a very different kind of hero, whose heroism Ajax himself is unable to appreciate. Ajax is confident that after his death his family will be protected by his brother Teucer. But though Teucer defends his dead

brother and his family with unfailing loyalty and courage, his defence would have been unavailing without support from the very last quarter from which Ajax would have expected it. Still, at the end of the play the impression of the greatness of the hero, as well as that of the sadness of his fate, is most powerfully conveyed.

The Oedipus of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* is a hero more sympathetic than Heracles or Ajax, or even Electra and Antigone; his courage and intelligence and his unselfish determination to save the city from the plague are there for all to see. But he too to some extent shows the defects inseparable from his heroic qualities; witness the ferocity which accompanies his unjust suspicion of Tiresias and Creon. It is a mistake to suppose that he is accounted personally guilty because of the killing of Laius and his party; he had been provoked by persons unknown to him, and the lives of Heracles, Theseus, and other heroes were full of such incidents. More relevant to his sad fate is the curse upon his father Laius, well known in myth; if it is not stressed in the play, that is because the poet is for the moment concerned to show how, not why, Oedipus met with his catastrophe. As Ajax is contrasted with Odysseus, Oedipus is contrasted with Creon—not that Creon is presented as a sympathetic character; our impression of his self-righteous smugness in the final scenes must have been intended by the poet, who after all knew the stories about Creon used in his own *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

The courage and nobility with which Electra over many years defies her father's murderers establish her heroic status. Yet she herself is aware that she has become a monster of hatred and resentment, though she pleads that she

has been made one by her situation and the oppression of her enemies. She is contrasted with Chrysothemis, who though she is no heroine is not the coward for whom her sister takes her. The horror of the matricide is by no means minimised; when she hears her mother cry out after Orestes' first blow, Electra exclaims, "Strike twice as hard!" As in the *Antigone*, the family curse has its importance in the play.

Philoctetes is a hero even more sympathetic than the first Oedipus; the courage with which he has supported his ordeal and the noble generosity revealed in his conversations with another true hero, Neoptolemus, clearly establish his heroic character. But he too has much of the hardness that goes with heroism; after his bow has been returned, he comes within a whisker of killing Odysseus, and nothing could have persuaded him to sail to Troy and take part in its capture but the miraculous appearance of the now deified Heracles.

The heroic nobility of the aged Oedipus is immediately recognised by Theseus, with whom he has an obvious affinity, and who sees at once the importance of securing for his city the protection which Oedipus as a defunct hero will be able to provide. But the devotion of Oedipus to his loyal daughters is equalled by his hatred for his disloyal sons, and his treatment of the sons will finally involve the daughters too in their destruction.

These tragedies can only be understood if one has some understanding of the religion that lies behind them; we must avoid the opposite mistakes of assuming that this religion resembled Christianity, or that since it did not resemble Christianity it was not really a religion. For the Olympian gods men are only a secondary consideration;

Greek religion thus avoids the problem of evil, which has perplexed many Christians. But they have certain human favourites, and the chief god, Zeus, punishes the crimes of men, although since the wicked often flourish it often happens that the punishment is not immediate, but falls only on the descendants of the criminal. Thus even the most admirable of men may be struck down in a moment for a crime committed by an ancestor; the most obvious example is the case of Oedipus. By showing the gods the honour that they demand, and by taking care to remember the limitations of mortality, it was possible for worshippers to remain on comparatively good terms with them; but often it was the bravest and most intelligent among men who like Heracles or Ajax were tempted to commit the offences which provoked divine resentment. Zeus would then punish them, but that punishment did not diminish their heroic status.

Before dismissing this religion as an outmoded superstition, one may well ask whether it has not certain merits. Neither the "pietists" nor the "hero-worshippers" are altogether right; the truth lies somewhere in between. The Greek gods stand for forces which we can see working in the world, and the things that happen in the world are more easily explained if the universe is ruled by powers like them than if it is controlled by an all-powerful and all-good divinity. Nietzsche, who at the age of twenty lost his Christian faith after reading Darwin's *Origin of Species*, started his career as a professor of Greek, and the influence of this outlook on his philosophy is readily apparent.[1] In a period in which he and writers influenced

[1] See the essay on Nietzsche in my book *Blood for the Ghosts*.

by him have attracted so much attention, it is easy to understand why Sophocles has aroused special interest.

Life

The ancient evidence for the life of Sophocles is conveniently collected by Stefan Radt, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* IV: *Sophocles* (1977), 29–95; Radt's collection of Testimonia will be referred to by the symbol T.

The ancient life preserved in a number of manuscripts of the plays (see T 1) was dated by F. Leo, *Die griechisch-römische Biographie* (1901), 22, in the generation after Aristarchus (216–144 B.C.); that is likely enough, seeing that the latest author whom it quotes is Carystius of Pergamum, a writer of the last third of the second century B.C. Its author, who is something better than a mere compiler, cites several Hellenistic scholars, including three pupils of Callimachus: Satyrus, Hermippus, and Ister. Satyrus wrote a life of Sophocles of which we have considerable fragments (P.Oxy. 1176, fr. 39 = T 148); Duris of Samos wrote on Sophocles (FGrH 76 F 29 = T 150), and also on Euripides; and Ister evidently wrote an account of Sophocles (see T, section U). See Mary R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (1981) for a translation (pp. 160–163) and discussion (pp. 66–74) of the *Life*. The general conclusion of her study is that little material was available to the Hellenistic biographers but inferences from the poets' own works or mentions of them in comedy, often used uncritically; contemporary information about them like that given by Ion of Chios in his *Epidemiai* or in inscriptions giving the names of public

officials or victors in the dramatic competitions is found only rarely.

Sophocles died in 406 B.C. (T, section B; see Jacoby on Apollodorus 244 FGrH 35). The Parian Marble (A 56) says that he won his first victory in 469/8 at the age of 28, which would make him born in 497/6; the date given by Apollodorus, 495/4, may have been obtained by assuming that he "flourished," that is, reached the age of forty, in 456/5, the year in which Aeschylus died and Euripides made his debut.

His father's name, Sophillus, is well attested; the author of the *Life* (T, section A) sensibly corrects authors who said his father was a carpenter or a sword maker by pointing out that he came from a rich and noble family, so that the notion may have arisen from his father's having had slaves who pursued these activities. His deme was Colonus, which he made the setting of his *Oedipus at Colonus*; that is Kolonos Hippios, so called to distinguish it from Kolonos Agoraios in the city, which was not a deme at all. The site of Kolonos Hippios now lies in an unpleasant part of modern Athens, near the railway station; in ancient times it was a rural deme, just north of the city.

The statement in the *Life* (7) that Sophocles was notable for his good looks, affability, and general popularity seems to be well supported. As a boy he is said to have excelled both in *mousike* and in *gymnastike*, not surprisingly in a young man of his social class and his attainments. His instructor in music is said to have been the poet Lamprus (*Life* 3); we are not obliged to believe this, or that Aeschylus taught him about tragedy, but whatever their personal relations may have been it is obvious that he learned a good deal from Aeschylus' work.

Sophocles is said to have won the tragic prize with the first trilogy he exhibited (T, section Hc); the conjecture, which goes back to Lessing's life of Sophocles, that the *Triptolemus* was part of the trilogy victorious on that occasion, cannot be substantiated, but neither can it be refuted. The *Life* (18) says that 130 plays were attributed to him, of which seventeen (or possibly seven) were thought to be spurious; the life of Sophocles in the Byzantine lexicon called the Suda (T 2) says 123, which yields the same total if the number of the spurious plays was seven. The official list of victors at the Dionysia credits him with eighteen victories; the Suda life says twenty-four, Carystius in *Life* 8 says twenty, and victories at the Lenaea may account for the difference. Not that his career was an unqualified success; Cratinus fr. 17 Kassel-Austin complains that an archon once refused him a chorus and gave one to the inferior poet Gnesippus, and Dicaearchus fr. 80 Wehrli (= T 39) recorded that the trilogy that contained the *Oedipus Tyrannus* was defeated by the tragedian Philocles. Still, according to the *Life*, he never won third prize.

Of the seven complete plays we have evidence for the dates of only two; *Philoctetes* was produced in 409 and *Oedipus at Colonus* in 401. The dates of the others are conjectural, and many scholars have underrated the difficulty of conjectural dating. Our material is limited, more so than in the case of Euripides, so that stylometric evidence must be viewed with caution; in any case, it is obvious that a poet might choose to treat different subjects in different fashions, so that even if we possessed all the works of Sophocles we could not be sure that stylometry would yield an accurate chronology. The story told in the

Life (4) that Sophocles was appointed general in 441 because of the success of the *Antigone* has surely little value for dating the play, like the story, also told in the *Life* on the authority of Satyrus, that he died while reading out *Antigone*. With great caution one may say that *The Women of Trachis* and *Antigone* seem to show a less advanced technique than the other plays, and may be conjectured to be comparatively early. Many scholars have believed *Ajax* to be an early work, alleging that it has elements of Aeschylean grandiloquence (ὄγκος); but if the passages bracketed in this text are indeed interpolated, this judgment has to be revised. To me *Ajax* seems to be a mature masterpiece, probably not much earlier than *Oedipus Tyrannus*. *Electra* is generally thought to show affinity with the two late plays of which we know the dates, and is presumably a late work also. One might, then, hazard the conjecture that *The Women of Trachis* and *Antigone* may belong to the fifties or the forties of the fifth century, *Ajax* and *Oedipus Tyrannus* to the thirties or the twenties, and *Electra* to the period between 420 and 410.

Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449 A 15, says that Sophocles introduced the third actor and also scene painting (T 95; see T, section R). We cannot be sure that the statement about the third actor is correct; Themistius 26, 316 D (T 96, doubtless following earlier authorities) says that the third actor was introduced by Aeschylus, who certainly used him to great advantage in his later works. The statement about scene painting apparently conflicts with the words of Vitruvius (VII, praef. 11) that the first scene painter was Agatharchus of Samos "Aeschylo docente"; but the date of Agatharchus is disputed.

Aristoxenus fr. 79 Wehrli (quoted in the *Life* 23) says that Sophocles introduced the Phrygian type of song into tragedy and also elements of the dithyrambic style; a Byzantine treatise on tragedy that may be by Psellus (eleventh century) says that he introduced not only the Phrygian but also the Lydian tone (T 99a). This means that besides the traditional Ionian and Dorian modes he used other modes believed to have come from Asia Minor; the Phrygian resembled the Dorian in being more austere, and the Lydian was more relaxed, like the Ionian. The *Life* (4) and the life in the Suda (T 2, 3) say that he increased the number of the chorus from twelve to fifteen; this is doubted by O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (1977) 323n2, who can see little point in so small a change, but then how could the mistake have arisen? The life in the Suda (T 2, 4) appears to say that he was the first to present four independent plays instead of a tetralogy on a single theme. This is wrong, since Aeschylus sometimes presented independent plays, as in the case of his tetralogy of 472 B.C., which included the *Persae*, but what was characteristic of Sophocles was the development of the single independent play. Other alleged technical innovations (see T, section R) are of less significance.

The statement in the *Life* (6) that Sophocles organised a society (*θίασος*) of educated persons honouring the Muses is dubious. Aristophanes, *Thesm.* 41, says that a *θίασος Μουσῶν*, a company of the Muses, visits the house of the tragedian Agathon, and the notion may derive from a similar passage in a comedy; see Lefkowitz, *Hermes* 112 (1984), 147. The life in the Suda (T 2, 7) says that he wrote a prose treatise on the chorus in dispute