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# OCTAVIA

A PLAY ATTRIBUTED TO SENECA

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION  
AND COMMENTARY

BY

ROLANDO FERRI

*Associate Professor of Latin, Università di Pisa*



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A LAURA E GIULIO

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## PREFACE

This book originated as a Tesi di Perfezionamento of the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, where it was examined in July 1998. Most of the work, however, was done during my earlier tenure of the Momigliano Fellowship in the Arts at University College London (1993–96), and during my subsequent residence in the same city until October 1998. The rest of the book was completed during my successive academic postings at Cremona (Università di Pavia) and at Pisa. The final version was delivered to the Press in the summer of 2002.

Of the many debts of gratitude I have contracted in the course of writing this book, the first I wish to acknowledge is to the electors to the Momigliano Fellowship in the Arts, endowed by Anna Laura and Giulio Lepschy in memory of Laura's father, Arnaldo Momigliano. It is to Laura and Giulio that I dedicate this book, for their friendship and inspiring intellectual support over the years. I do not think the book would have existed without them.

Of other London friends, Helen Gregory has put me in the greatest debt, helping me to revise the English of sizeable portions of both Introduction and Commentary, as well as discussing and disagreeing with me on many points of substance and detail. The Italian Department at UCL provided a congenial and inspiring place for work and research, even for a classicist, as did the Institute of Classical Studies and its splendid library. The then Scuola (now Facoltà) di Paleografia of the Università di Pavia helped me financially in various ways, especially in contributing towards the cost of acquiring MS microfilms.

I also wish to thank the Series Editors, above all Michael Reeve, Richard Tarrant, and Jonathan Powell for including the volume among the *Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries*. Anyone who knows these scholars knows what it means to receive their advice. I thank them for their patience, their intelligent suggestions, and for all they have taught me. Gian Biagio Conte

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## PREFACE

and Elaine Fantham read different semi-final drafts and gave me great encouragement and the benefit of their critical insight along the way. In the commentary, the initials of all these scholars identify some of the more specific proposals they have advanced. Of people I have never met, but who have been with me on my desk these several years, I have to thank Otto Zwierlein. I have taken issue sometimes with what he argues about *Octavia*, but I have learned most of what I know about Senecan tragedy from his edition and his *Kommentar* (Mainz, 1986).

The Cambridge staff who saw the book through the press, and particularly Muriel Hall, Alison Powell and Michael Sharp, deserve praise for dealing so efficiently and helpfully with a difficult typescript.

Finally, I wish to thank my parents for their support, and my wife, Barbara, for accompanying some critical moments with her understanding and intelligence.