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SOPHOCLES
ELECTRA

EDITED BY

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University College London*



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It is not prudent to oppose perfidy to perfidy – the
most efficient weapon with which men can en-
counter falsehood is truth. MACAULAY

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PREFACE

I differ at a good many points in this edition of Sophocles' *Electra* from many, and at times all, of my predecessors. Let me say, then, to begin with, how much I am sensible of owing to them (particularly to Jebb) and how much my admiration for them has grown as I proceeded. I have learnt from them to correct several sheer misconceptions with which I started out. Where I have disagreed, it is because reflection has not led me to alter my opinion.

Coming to contemporaries, I gratefully acknowledge the help I have received from the following: Professor T. B. L. Webster, who first suggested that I should edit the *Electra* in this series, and who placed at my disposal a number of papers of his wife's and other scholars'; Professors E. W. Handley, O. Skutsch, and E. G. Turner, who all generously encouraged me and helped in various ways to limit or arrange my teaching schedule so that I could give sufficient time to the *Electra*; all my friends and colleagues (including all the above, and also Miss M. L. Cunningham and Professor R. P. Winnington-Ingram), who helped me by discussion to clarify my views on the play; Miss Margaret Packer of the London Institute of Classical Studies, and Miss Frances Mills, Secretary to the Greek Department of University College London, who between them shared the task of typing and re-typing my manuscript. For the final form I am greatly indebted to the two general editors. To Mrs P. E. Easterling I cannot begin to express my gratitude. She read through the original version with devoted care and attention, corrected mistakes, made many constructive suggestions, and relieved me of much of the tedious detail of editorship; Mr E. J. Kenney as second reader also helped me greatly. So did Dr Jeremy Mynott, who showed me how to compress and reduce a script which in the end proved too long for the uses for which it was intended. Needless to say, none of those mentioned is responsible for the views I have expressed. I have also to thank the Henry Brown Fund for a substantial grant towards the publication.

I am grateful to the Oxford University Press for permission to adopt

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the standard Oxford Text of A. C. Pearson, with some modifications. A list of passages in which this edition differs from Pearson's text will be found on page 255. Where the first person is used in the *apparatus criticus*, it refers to Pearson, not to myself.

A word finally on my translations of certain passages of the Greek: I am aware that an Anglo-Irish idiom is apparent in them. This is deliberate, particularly in the more emotional passages, where I believe that Anglo-Irish is more faithful to the tone of the Greek.

Since writing the above I have to acknowledge a further considerable debt – to the University Printing House reader.

December 1971

J. H. KELLS