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In this fascinating and accessible book, David Wiles introduces ancient Greek theatre to students and enthusiasts interested in knowing how the plays were first performed. Theatre was a ceremony bound up with fundamental activities in classical Athenian life and Wiles explores those elements which created the theatre of the time. Actors rather than writers are the book's main concern and Wiles examines how the actor used the resources of storytelling, dance, mask, song and visual action to create a large-scale event that would shape the life of the citizen community. The book assumes no prior knowledge of the ancient world, and is written to answer the questions of those who want to know how the plays were performed, what they meant in their original social context, what they might mean in a modern performance and what can be learned from and achieved by performances of Greek plays today.

DAVID WILES is Professor of Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London. In addition to numerous articles on classical drama, he has published *The Masks of Menander: sign and meaning in Greek and Roman performance* (Cambridge, 1991) and *Tragedy in Athens: performance space and theatrical meaning* (Cambridge, 1997). He also writes on festive aspects of Tudor drama and has published *The Early Plays of Robin Hood* (1981), *Shakespeare's clown: actor and text in the Elizabethan playhouse* (Cambridge, 1987) and *Shakespeare's almanac: 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', marriage and the Elizabethan calendar* (1993). He has contributed a chapter on Roman and medieval drama to the *Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre* (1995).

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Most of the drawings are taken from photographs. A few are adapted and modified from modern drawings: figure 6 after *Dictionnaire des antiquités*; figure 11 after Richard Leacroft; figure 12 after Emil Orlik; figure 14 after George Izenour; and figure 20 after Yannis Kokkos.

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Note on the text

Translations in this book are my own, unless otherwise stated. There is an international system of standard page/line references for Greek texts based on the first manuscript or edition, which allows almost any academic translation to be consulted. I have given references to two useful collections of primary material in translation, though I have used my own translations in this book:

- ALC* *Ancient Literary Criticism: the principal texts in new translations*, ed. D. A. Russell and M. Winterbottom (Oxford University Press, 1972)
- COAD* *Contexts of Ancient Drama*, ed. Eric Csapo and William J. Slater (University of Michigan Press, 1995)

I also refer frequently to three collections of essays:

- MTAG* Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, tr. J. Lloyd (New York: Zone Books, 1990)
- NTDWD* *Nothing To Do With Dionysos? Athenian drama in its social context*, ed. John J. Winkler and Froma Zeitlin (Princeton University Press, 1992)
- CCGT* *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P. E. Easterling (Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Greek names are nowadays sometimes transliterated according to the traditional Latin system (e.g. Aeschylus) and sometimes directly from the Greek (e.g. Aiskhylos). Since we do not know quite what the Greek sounded like, I have used the form that felt most familiar. I have also used the translated titles that seem most recognizable, e.g.

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Note on the text

Aristophanes, *Women at the Thesmophoria* rather than *Thesmophoriazousae* (the Latinized Greek title) or *The Poet and the Women* (Penguin edition); Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* rather than *Oedipus Tyrannus* (Latinized Greek), *Oedipus Rex* (Latin), or *Oedipus the Tyrant*.