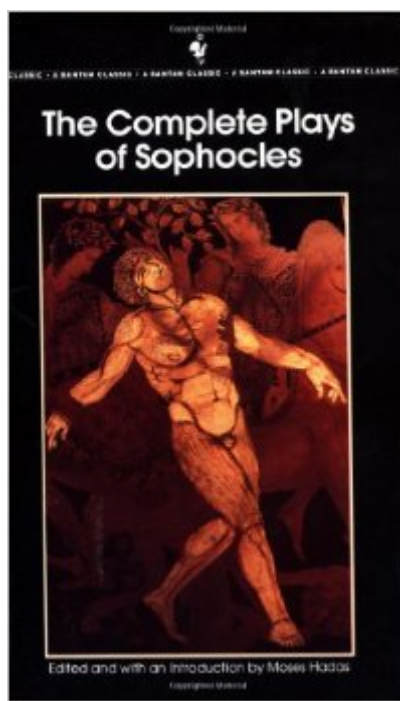


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The Complete Plays Of Sophocles



Synopsis

Oedipus the King • Antigone • Electra • AjaxTrachinian Women • Philoctetes • Oedipus at ColonusThe greatest of the Greek tragedians, Sophocles wrote over 120 plays, surpassing his older contemporary Aeschylus and the younger Euripides in literary output as well as in the number of prizes awarded his works. Only the seven plays in this volume have survived intact. From the complex drama of Antigone, the heroine willing to sacrifice life and love for a principle, to the mythic doom embodied by Oedipus, the uncommonly good man brought down by the gods, Sophocles possessed a tragic vision that, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, "saw life steadily and saw it whole." This one-volume paperback edition of Sophocles' complete works is a revised and modernized version of the famous Jebb translation, which has been called "the most carefully wrought prose version of Sophocles in English." **Moses Hadas

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Customer Reviews

Several years ago, during my first year of college, I purchased and read one of Aristophanes' better known plays, *The Clouds*. I thoroughly enjoyed the translation, and I made a mental note to read more Aristophanes as time provided. Many years passed between that pleasant reading and my purchase of this book, *The Complete Plays of Aristophanes*. Any book that purports to include the "Complete" works of an ancient author automatically draws my attention. And so, when I chanced upon this title at Borders and discovered it to have a reasonable price (\$5.95 + tax for 11 plays, about .58 cents a play), I could see little reason not to buy this work. Standing at its price, *The Complete Plays of Aristophanes* is a great deal. The plays are complete and each includes an introductory page. However, in terms of readability and enjoyment, the book suffers in several

regards. Firstly, some of the translations are nearly unreadable, especially when the translations are in antiquated English slang. This is not to say all the translations are unreadable. The work includes the translations of four men: B.B. Rogers, Moses Hadas, R.H. Webb, and Jack Lindsay. I found that one play would have a dreadful translation (by the standards of today), only for the next play, translated by the same man, to have a much clearer translation. I wonder if the problem lies less with the translator than with the difficulties of translating into contemporary English, as well as the gap between the English language spectrum of the translators and the English known and used today. Besides the translations, there is the issue of the play introductions. Some of the play introductions are helpful in providing the historical background of the time in which Aristophanes wrote the play.

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