

1. Record Nr.	UNISA996247990703316
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Titolo	A Study of Sophoclean Drama // G. M. Kirkwood
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Ithaca, NY : , : Cornell University Press, , [1978] ©2013
ISBN	0-8014-6671-7
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xviii, 308 p. )
Collana	Cornell Studies in Classical Philology ; ; 31
Classificazione	FH 22984
Disciplina	882/.01
Soggetti	Mythology, Greek, in literature Tragedy LITERARY CRITICISM / Ancient & Classical
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 295-300) and indexes.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Preface to the Paperback Edition -- Preface -- CHAPTER I. Introduction -- CHAPTER II. Construction -- CHAPTER III. Character Portrayal -- CHAPTER IV. The Role of the Chorus -- CHAPTER V. Some Notes on Diction -- CHAPTER VI. The Irony of Sophocles -- APPENDIX. On the Approximate Date of The Trachinian Women -- Bibliographical Note -- Bibliographical Note to the Paperback Edition -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Although many commentators have dealt with various aspects of structure in Sophoclean drama, G. M. Kirkwood contends that "Sophocles' mastery of dramatic form is accepted with casual and superficial deference rather than fully and clearly understood." This book shows how Sophocles' method of presenting character, his unique handling of myth, his predilection for presenting ideas by comparison and contrast, and his principles of structure are so closely related that they serve to clarify each other. In an analysis of the form of Sophocles' seven extant plays, Kirkwood demonstrates the existence of several deliberate and distinct types of dramatic construction. Sophocles' use of the chorus, his irony, and certain aspects of diction are considered as a part of his dramatic art and as elements of structure. Kirkwood discusses a number of traditional problems, among them questions of consistency and meaning in passages from Ajax, Antigone, and Electra.

He also considers the problem of "diptych" structure, and shows that it is a definite dramatic shape, of primary importance in understanding the three plays in which it appears. Distinctive Sophoclean concepts in which the words eugenes and daimon are conspicuous, the meaning of tragedy in relation to Sophocles' plays, and Sophocles' outlook on deity and on man and his fate are also subjects of illuminating discussions. This book offers ample evidence to support Kirkwood's contention that, "Only when we inquire into the means by which Sophocles invests his plays with their constant air not only of relevance but of immediacy do we begin to understand Sophoclean form." For the paperback edition of this classic study of Sophoclean poetics, the author has written a new preface that assesses the reception of his work and has updated the bibliography to include more recent scholarship.

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