



Sophocles' "Oedipus at Colonus": Manuscript Materials (The Cornell Years)

W. B. Yeats

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Yeats first expressed interest in producing translations of Greek classical plays in March of 1903, in the early days of establishing the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. But not until two decades later did he turn his hand to creating his own versions of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*. Working from Victorian translations into English and French by classicists R. C. Jebb and Paul Masqueray, he completed *Oedipus the King* in the fall of 1926 and *Oedipus at Colonus* a year later.

The second play, like the first, he gave directly to the Abbey players, prompting him to revise and hone his texts through many versions to achieve his stated goal of putting the play "into simple speakable prose" that he hoped would be his "contribution to the Abbey Repertory." The play had a successful run in September of 1927 but was not published until 1934.

This edition presents photographs and transcriptions of three revised typescripts of *Oedipus at Colonus* that Yeats prepared and extensively revised over a period of eight-and-a-half months and a reading text based on the first publication of the play, which is presented with an apparatus of collations from the many proofs for three different intended publications. Included also are photographs and transcriptions of the verse choruses, except for the two appearing in *The Tower* (1928), also part of the Cornell Yeats; an appendix of other typescripts and proofs that invite detailed treatment; and a brief account of the music written for the play by Lennox Robinson, who was also its first director. The texts are prefaced by a census of manuscripts, an introduction discussing Yeats's development of the play, and a chronology of composition.

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