

A Newly-Discovered Edition of Sophocles by Peter Elmsley

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1. Introduction

The north transept of Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford contains an impressive memorial to Peter Elmsley,¹ one of the most important English classicists,² who died in 1825.³ Set up

¹ For initial orientation on Elmsley's life see C. Collard, "Elmsley, Peter (1774–1825)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8737, accessed 16 October 2006], and "Elmsley, Peter (1774–1825)," in R. B. Todd (ed.), *Dictionary of British Classicists* (Bristol 2004) I 286–288. See also J. E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship* III (Cambridge 1908) 394–395, and M. L. Clarke, *Greek Studies in England 1700–1830* (Cambridge 1945) 97–99. For Elmsley's relations with contemporary scholars see N. M. Horsfall, "Classical Studies in England, 1810–1825," *GRBS* 15 (1974) 449–477. Further bibliography can be found in P. G. Naiditch, "Classical Studies in Nineteenth-century Great Britain as Background to the 'Cambridge Ritualists'," in W. M. Calder III (ed.), *The Cambridge Ritualists Reconsidered* (ICS Suppl. 2 [1991]) 123–152, at 126–127 n.11.

² For praise of Elmsley's scholarship see e.g. J. G. J. Hermann (ed.), *Euripidis Medea* (Leipzig 1822) 407; F. H. M. Blaydes, *Achamians* (1887) xvi; A. E. Housman, review of I. Bywater, *Four Centuries of Greek Learning in England* (Oxford 1919), *CR* 34 (1920) 110–111 (= *The Classical Papers of A. E. Housman* III 1004–06, at 111 = 1005–06).

³ There is a useful anonymous obituary of Elmsley in *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle* 95.1 (London, April 1825) 374–377, originally published in the *Oxford Herald* in 1825. Sandys, *History* 395 n.3, says that H. R. Luard (1825–91) attributed the piece to Edward Copleston (1776–1849), Provost of Oriel. Naiditch (Calder, *Cambridge Ritualists* 126–127 n.11) mistakenly suggests that the obituary was written by Luard. Edward Burton's anonymous review of the Oxford editions of the *Scholia to Sophocles* (1825) and the *Tragedies of Sophocles* (1826) in *The British Critic. Quarterly Theological Review and Ecclesiastical Record* 1.2 (April 1827) 281–320, contains a full discussion of Elmsley's life and career. Burton (1794–1836), Old Westminster, Student of Christ Church, and (from 1829) Regius Professor

by his old friend Charles Watkin Williams Wynn, it lists the plays which Elmsley edited: Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, Euripides' *Heraclidae*, *Medea*, and *Bacchae*, and Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Oedipus Coloneus*.⁴ Impressive as it is, this list is incomplete. For Elmsley also produced an edition of the whole of Sophocles, of which, it appears, only a single copy has survived. The purpose of this article is to give an account of this book, its contents, the circumstances of its publication and suppression, and its place in Elmsley's scholarly career.⁵

The sole copy of the edition which I have been able to trace is in the British Library, shelfmark C.28.i.12. It contains 352 numbered pages, but has no title page or printing information. A stamp on the inside cover indicates that it was rebound in 1936; on the spine is written "Sophocles. Works. Vol. I." The reference to volume one is presumably taken from a signature mark on page 1, which is also found on pages 209 and 257. Another stamp, dated 16 July 1875, shows that the British Museum acquired the book on or shortly before that date.

On the first page is found the following anonymous note in pencil, dated September 1824:

of Divinity, is identified as the author in *The Theological Works of Edward Burton* (Oxford 1837) I 5–31 ("Memoir of the author," anonymous), at 10–11.

⁴ P. Elmsley, *Aristophanis Comoedia Acharnenses* (Oxford 1809¹, 1819²), *Euripidis Heraclidae* (Oxford 1813¹, 1828²), *Euripidis Medea* (Oxford/London 1818¹, Oxford 1828²), *Euripidis Bacchae* (Oxford 1821), *Sophoclis Oedipus Tyrannus* (Oxford 1811¹, 1825²), *Sophoclis Oedipus Coloneus* (Oxford 1823). The monument goes on to declare "quale acumen graecae linguae admoverit, testantur opera mortuo diu superfutura."

⁵ Throughout this article I make use of two of Elmsley's correspondences, which as far as I know have not been exploited before. The first is with Wynn (1775–1850), Old Westminster and Christ Church, M.P. for Old Sarum (1797–99) and Montgomeryshire (1799–1850). This correspondence is held at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth, Coed y Maen bundle no. 10 (92 letters, dating 1796–1824, numbered 776–869). The second is with William Laing (1764–1832), the Edinburgh publisher and bookseller, which can now be found in the Special Collections department of the Edinburgh University Library, shelfmark La. IV. 17 fols. 3019–50 (16 letters, dating 1803–06). On Laing see n.12 below.

This imperfect volume formed part of an intended edition of Sophocles by Mr. Elmsley. Before the day of publication the editor determined to destroy every copy – only one escaped, which had been already deposited in the library of the present Dean of Westminster, of whom Mr. Elmsley was in new endeavours to obtain it. – This is probably the only other specimen existing.

A clipping from a catalogue containing the same information, probably from a bookseller or library, is pasted on the facing page.

The book contains all the plays in the order *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Oedipus Coloneus*, *Antigone*, *Trachinae*, *Ajax*, *Philoctetes*, *Electra*. The *Oedipus Coloneus* is missing lines 1204–1689, while the *Electra* is missing lines 1222–1510. There are no introductory remarks, notes, or apparatus. It is not clear whether the edition actually ended at *El.* 1221 (and hence was incorrectly printed) or whether the copy in the British Library was mutilated after publication. 352 pages can be divided into 22 gatherings of 16 pages, so it would appear that one gathering or more went missing at some stage.

The volume contains an ownership inscription by one André B. Knox of Trinity College, dated to December 1867. This must be André Blasini Knox (born 1838), a barrister, son of the Chief Justice of the West Indies, who was at Trinity College, Cambridge and took his M.A. in the same year as the inscription.⁶ There is also a bookplate with the name Peter Hall. A pencil inscription shows that the volume once retailed for 4 pounds and 4 shillings.

2. *The value of the edition*

Few scholars had more of an impact on the text of Sophocles than Peter Elmsley. We can most easily assess the extent of his contribution by comparing the two currently standard editions. In the OCT (revised impression 1992), Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones and N. G. Wilson put 79 of his emendations in the text, and 75 more in the apparatus. R. D. Dawe in the third edition of his

⁶ Cf. J. Venn and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of all known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, from the Earliest Times to 1900* (Cambridge 1922–54) part 2 vol. 4 p.68 (I owe this reference to Dr Stray).

Teubner text (1996) adopts 79 into the text and a further 61 into the apparatus. Between them, the two editions list a total of 173 different emendations, either in the text or in the apparatus. Thirteen of these occur in *OC* 1204–1689 and *El.* 1222–1510, which are not found in the edition, so the relevant figure for our calculations is 160. I have not included emendations attributed to two scholars where Elmsley is certainly the later of the pair (e.g. *OT* 1286).

Elmsley's edition of Sophocles contains 56 of these emendations, or 35% of the total. They are as follows:

Oedipus Tyrannus: 6 (192 περιβόατος, 204 ἀγκυλᾶν, 405 Οἰδίπους, 801 ἦ, 1232 ἦδεμεν, 1393 ἦ)

Oedipus Coloneus: 26 (36 νυν, 72 σμικρὰ, 184 ξένας, 197 ἠσύχω, 199 ἄρμοσαι, 212 τί δέ;, 401 θύρασι, 422 τ', 450 οὔτε, 497 ἀτέρα, 504 χορὴ στέμμ', 527 ματρόθεν, 557 Οἰδίπους, 587 ἄγων, 677 ἀνάνεμον, 680 θεαῖς, 702 νέος, 708 τᾶδε, 748 αἰκείας, 768 ἦ, 885 πέρα, 945 δεξοίατ', 1015 ἀμυναθεῖν, 1038 νυν, 1074 ἔρδουσ', 1746 ἐλαχέτην)

Antigone: 4 (500 ἀρέστ' εἶη, 1096 εἰκαθεῖν, 1102 παρεικαθεῖν, 1200 κατασχεθεῖν)

Trachinae: 4 (87 παρῆ, 414 ἦ, 645 σοῦται, 780 ῥίπτει)

Ajax: 6 (58 ἐπίπνων, 179 εἶ, 396 ἔλεσθ' ἔλεσθέ μ', 450 ἀδάματος, 882 Ὀλυμπιαδᾶν, 1377 ἦ)

Philoctetes: 5 (116 <ἄν>, 482 πρύμνην, 612 πέρσειαν, 1079 ὁρῶμεθα, 1219 ἦ)

Electra: 5 (396 εἰκαθεῖν, 754 κατασχεθόντες, 950 λελείμμεθα, 1014 εἰκαθεῖν, 1023 ἦ)

Of these, 23 are printed in the text by Dawe as well as Lloyd-Jones and Wilson. 13 are printed in the text in only one of these editions, while 20 find a place in the text of neither. Many of the conjectures are orthographical changes. This should come as no surprise, given Elmsley's unique achievement in this field.

3. Contemporary evidence for the edition

Modern accounts of Elmsley and his work show no knowledge of this edition; nor do the accounts of Elmsley's life published shortly after his death. Indeed, sometimes they explicitly refer to other, later works as Elmsley's "first" scholarly

productions.⁷ The only printed reference to the edition which I have found is in an anonymous⁸ review of Elmsley's edition of the *Oedipus Coloneus* (Oxford 1823), which runs as follows:

In the edition of Sophocles, which Mr. E. printed nearly twenty years ago in Scotland,⁹ but the whole of which he subsequently

⁷ So e.g. Burton (n.3 above) 283, "we will now proceed to mention, in their order, the different editions of Greek plays which he published. The earliest of his works of this kind was the *Acharnenses* of Aristophanes, which was printed at Oxford in 1809"; also 284, "he gave notice, at the conclusion of the preface [to his edition of the *OT*, Oxford 1811], of an intention to edit all the plays of Sophocles in the same manner; and the admirers of that poet, as well as every classical scholar, must deeply regret that he did not carry this project into effect." Cf. in addition Anon., "English Scholarship – its Rise, Progress, and Decay," *The Church of England Quarterly Review* 5 (April 1839) 145–175, 398–426, at 413, refers to Elmsley's *Edinburgh Review* articles as his "first appearance as a classical scholar" while making no reference to an edition (Clarke, *Greek Studies* 227 n.5, reports that according to D. S. Robertson, Housman considered this article to be the work of George Burges).

⁸ The anonymity of the reviewer is frustrating. In a letter dated 14 November 2005 Dr Christopher Stray comments that the style of the piece suggests Dobree. The antipathy between him and Elmsley would explain why the latter did not manage to retrieve his copy of the book when he had decided to suppress it. If this identification is correct, Occam's Razor suggests that the copy to which Dobree had access was the same one which Knox, another Trinity man, possessed in 1867: the same one, that is, as is now in the British Library. It is more probable than not that Dobree did not actually own this copy, as his books ended up in the Cambridge University Library and the Wren Library at Trinity.

⁹ Elmsley's associations with Edinburgh go back to his uncle, a bookseller and publisher also called Peter Elmsley (1735/6–1802). Printed sources are vague on the scope of Elmsley's successive stays in Edinburgh (e.g. "for some time" [Copleston, n.3 above, 375], "for a time" [Collard, *DNB*]) and London ("a few years" [Copleston 376]), "a year or two in London" [Collard]), and indeed on his movements in his early years. I take the opportunity to supply some details. After brief visits to Edinburgh in 1799 (Wynn 777–779) and 1802 (Wynn 784–785) he lived there from November 1802 (Wynn 786) to at least 10 June 1803 (Wynn 792). On 29 September 1803 he is in 37 Sloane Street, London (Laing 3021), and is to go to Bath "on Tuesday next." By 12 October 1803 he is in Bath (Wynn 793), and is still there on the 26th (Laing 3023–24); he implies that he will be in London from the opening of Parliament. From at least December 1803 to at least October 1804 he lived in London, in Chelsea and then 3 Tavistock Street,

committed *ignibus emendaturis*, with the exception of a copy or two still in existence, this same conjecture is found in the same situation. When the reading was shown to Porson, he said, “it won’t do.”¹⁰

The conjecture in question is at *OC* 504, where Elmsley suggested $\chi\rho\eta\ \sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\mu\mu$ in place of the varying articulations of $\chi\rho\eta\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ offered by the manuscripts. As we have already seen, this conjecture is indeed found in the British Library volume. It was also published in his review of R. Porson, *Euripidis Hecuba* (London 1808), in *The Edinburgh Review* vol. 19 no. 37 (November 1811) 64–95, at 79, but there is no reference there to any previous place of publication.

Further evidence for the edition can be found in Elmsley’s correspondence. I cite references to it in his letters to Charles Watkin Williams Wynn.

Letter 789 (Edinburgh, 10 February 1803): “I am at present busily employed in printing an Edition of an Arabic writer, called Sophocles, who lived in the reign of the caliph Al-Mamûr. I hope it will be finished before I leave this place for the present, which will be in May. You will then see that even the Edinburgh printers can print books in outlandish characters.”

Bedford Square (Wynn 794–798, Laing 3026–41). We next find him in 45 Gower Street on 11 February 1805 (Laing 3042–43), and he is also there on 29 April 1805 (Laing 3044–47), 9 July 1805 (Bodley MSS. Eng. lett. d. 213 fols. 219–220, to Reginald Heber), and 1 July 1806 (Laing 3048–49). He was, however, in Edinburgh for about a week in October 1805 with his friend Robert Southey (letters from Southey to Wynn, 3 and 20 October 1805, in J. W. Warton, *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey* [London 1856] I 340–341). After that there is no clue to his location until 6 November 1807, when he is at St Mary Cray in Kent (Wynn 800).

¹⁰ *The Classical Journal* vol. 28 no. 56 (December 1823) 356–363, at 362. F. H. M. Blydes, *Sophocles* (London 1859) xxxiv–v, refers to this reference: “An entire revision of Sophocles, as I have read somewhere in the ‘Classical Journal’, was prepared, if not actually published, by Elmsley; but so dissatisfied was he with his performance, that he either destroyed or recalled it after publication.” He goes on to say (xxxv n.1) that “it is much to be regretted he did not live to execute a fresh and more complete edition of the great Tragedian: for no scholar of modern times was better qualified in every way for such a difficult task; and critics of his calibre are of too rare a growth for us to hope that the world may soon see his like again.”

Letter 790 (Edinburgh, 18 February 1803): “When my Sophocles is finished I shall be happy to furnish you with as many copies as you please on the most reasonable terms; and, if you buy to sell again, I will make you a large deduction in the price.”

Letter 791 (Edinburgh, 21 April 1803): “My Sophocles will not deserve a place among the collections of the curious. I have printed none on large paper. The plays are almost finished.”

Letter 792 (Edinburgh, 10 June 1803): “I have finished the text of Sophocles, and am employed in the notes, or rather, various readings. I have printed an Edition of the *Medea* of Euripides,¹¹ by way of experiment, with many alterations in the orthography. Among others I mark the long vowels (A, I, Y.) whenever they occur. The printers have not the common mark ā, ē, ī, ō, ū united to Greek characters, for which reason I am forced to use the soft spirit, of which I make no other use. This will appear uncouth to the eye, but in a single play it is of no consequence.”

Soon after the last letter Elmsley moved from Edinburgh to London, which explains why his correspondence with Wynn temporarily ceases just at the point that his correspondence with William Laing, the Edinburgh bookseller and publisher, begins.¹² Again, I give all references to the edition that survive in these letters.

Letter 3021 (37 Sloane Street, London, 29 September 1803): “Will you be so good as to ask Stewart for a few copies of the first half

¹¹ See below, section 5.

¹² For William Laing see M. C. T. Simpson, “Laing, William (1764–1832),” *Oxford Dictionary* [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15893>, accessed 16 October 2006] and Clarke, *Greek Studies* 47. His decision to publish Greek editions led him to lament to Elmsley, “I am quite sick of an undertaking, which, even under the most favourable circumstances of speed and regularity of editing, must afford no adequate return” (National Library of Scotland, MS. 9814, f.16; Edinburgh, 18 April 1804; brought to my attention by Dr Stray and kindly transcribed by Miss McIntyre). Laing published editions of Thucydides (1804, ed. Elmsley), Herodotus (bk. 1 by Porson, 2–9 by George Dunbar), Xenophon (by Adam Dickinson). An edition of Plato was intended but never accomplished. In Clarke’s words, “the function of these scholars seems to have been limited to proof correction, and they did not supply new readings or notes. Laing’s editions thus have little scholarly interest, nor are they of any great distinction typographically.” See further Clarke, *Greek Studies* 40–47, on Greek in Scotland to 1830.

sheet of my notes on Sophocles. If you have a safe opportunity, be so good as to send them directed to me at Payne & Mackinlays.”¹³

Letter 3023–24 (Bath, 26 October 1803): “I was about to request you to desire Stewart to transmit the whole of my Sophocles to London: but I believe it will be more convenient to finish it in Edinburgh. Towards May I shall have leisure, and I hope to spend the summer in Scotland. I like Edinburgh but when it is thinnest of people.”

Letter 3042–43 (45 Gower Street, London, 11 February 1805): “I will be much obliged to you if you will call on Stewart, and request him to send the whole of my Sophocles, as it {h}is in his warehouse, paper and all, directed to me at Payne and Mackinlay’s. I find it impossible to go on with it unless I have the printer under my eye. I owe him a trifle, which I will thank you to discharge for me. I believe that you have the sheets of a play of Euripides, which may as well accompany the other.”

Letter 3044–47 (Gower Street, London, 29 April 1805): “In the first place, I must thank you for forwarding my Sophocles. He arrived here in perfect good health, and I am now very busily employed in completing him. Unfortunately, however, a cruel accident has occurred, which compells me again to request your assistance. I had printed two half sheets of notes, which it was my intention to cancell, and print anew. Mr Stewart, knowing this, has very properly suppressed them. As, however, the principal part of these two half sheets will appear in another dress, it would save me some trouble to possess a few copies of the first of them: which is marked Bb. I will, therefore, be much obliged to you, if you will endeavour to redeem two or three of them, unless the whole impression has been consumed in singing Mrs Stewarts’ roasted fowls. If they can be preserved, I should be happy to receive them under covers, directed to C. W. W. Wynn Esq., Lincoln’s Inn, London.”

The edition is likely to have been finished and published in 1805 or possibly in 1806. Letters from this period do not survive, so we are missing Elmsley’s testimony on the reasons

¹³ “In 1797 Elmsley gave up his business to his shopman, David Bremmer, who died a few years later and was succeeded in 1802 by John Mackinlay, one of Elmsley’s assistants, and James Payne, a younger son of Thomas Payne, of the Mews-gate, a fellow club member” (O. M. Brack, “Elmsley, Peter (1735/6–1802),” *Oxford Dictionary* [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8736>, accessed 16 October 2006]).

for the suppression. But a clue remains among his papers in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Bodley MS. Clar. Press d. 46 fols. 149–176 consists of a list of notes by Elmsley with the heading (in capitals) “Corrigenda.” These corrections correspond to the text of the edition now in the British Library. Scores of alterations are proposed. In proposing them, he always lists the seven plays in the order in which the edition presents them. Some may reflect changes of mind on the author’s part: so he proposes to write $\mu\eta\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$, $\mu\eta\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}\ \pi\omicron\tau\epsilon$, and $\mu\eta\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}\ \pi\acute{\omega}\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon$ in place of $\mu\eta\delta\acute{\epsilon}$, $\mu\eta\delta\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon$, and $\mu\eta\delta\epsilon\pi\acute{\omega}\pi\omicron\tau\epsilon$, before specifying every line where he would like the change. Others are certainly simple errors, such as problems over epheletic nu, wrong accents, incorrect line numbers, and assorted other mistakes.

Some other alterations anticipate conjectures later made by Elmsley himself or by other scholars. These are: *OT* 18 οἶδε τ’ (anticipating C. G. A. Erfurdt’s conjecture, published in his edition, Leipzig 1809), *OC* 13 ἄν δ’ (credited by modern editors to Elmsley, but not appearing in print before this date), *El.* 105 del. ἄστρων (anticipating J. H. Monk, “Notes on the *Electra* of Sophocles,” *Museum Criticum* 1 [1813] 60–78, at 66–67; priority with P. P. Dobree, *Adversaria* II [Cambridge 1843] 49, cannot be determined, as Dobree, like Elmsley, never published the emendation), 1426 τέθνηκεν ἢ τάλαινα attributed to *Electra* (here Elmsley is anticipated by Erfurdt, Leipzig 1803; but it invites the question of how many other speaker attributions in this vexed passage Elmsley was able to reassign correctly). Among the proposed alterations are several from the parts of the *OC* and the *Electra* which are not found in the volume in the British Library. This means that the surviving book is either a rogue copy from an otherwise blameless print run, or that it was printed complete and subsequently lost the missing pages.

The large number of changes which Elmsley records suggests his dissatisfaction with the printed edition. We can imagine a scenario in which Elmsley sees the newly-printed edition for the first time and is appalled by the number of mistakes which it contains. He recalls as many copies that have already been distributed as he can, and then sets out to record all the changes which he would like to see in a future edition. In the end, he does not proceed further with the task, perhaps because of a change of plan: he now wishes to publish large

editions of individual plays rather than a complete text of Sophocles with briefer notes.

A letter in the Elmsley papers held by Westminster School (in Box 2), transcribed and brought to my attention by Dr Stray, appears to support the hypothesis of a deliberate change of plan. The letter is from Thomas Gaisford to Elmsley, dated 17 June 1810. The relevant paragraph reads as follows:

I am seriously and sincerely sorry that you have altered your plans respecting Sophocles (edition). Mr Collingwood, by your desire I believe, sent me the fifth sheet of Oed. Tyr. I was highly pleased with the corrections introduced into the text, and with the style and manner of the notes. I have rarely seen verbal criticism and philological explanation so happily and satisfactorily combined. Your new plan certainly will not be without its advantages; but the former, I would venture somewhat confidently to assert, would have been preeminently useful. I think also, that you will not do yourself justice, unless you distinctly assert your claim to those emendations &c. which have been forestalled in the German edition. Could you not put forth the Ajax and the Oed. Col., neither of which have yet been edited by Erfurdt?

4. *The other surviving copy*

The anonymous pencil note on the British Library copy refers to another surviving copy in the library of “the present Dean of Westminster.” In 1824 this was John Ireland (1761–1842), Dean from 9 February 1816.¹⁴ Although not a classical scholar himself, Ireland was a great sponsor of classical education, and the founder of the Ireland scholarships at Oxford “for the promotion of classical learning and taste.” Installed as a Prebendary of the Abbey on 14 August 1802 and as Subdean in 1806, he was thus already associated with the Abbey at the time of the publication of the edition. The Abbey was still in control of Westminster School at this point, as it would remain until 1868. Elmsley’s continuing connexion with his alma mater (cf. his editions of Euripides cited in section 5 below) explains why a copy of the edition should have ended up in

¹⁴ Information on Ireland is taken from Tony Trowles, “Ireland, John (1761–1842),” *Oxford Dictionary* [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14448>, accessed 16 October 2006].

Ireland's possession. It does not necessarily mean that Elmsley was acquainted with Ireland.

In a letter dated 11 January 2005, the Librarian of Westminster Abbey, Dr Tony Trowles, has informed me that in his will Ireland bequeathed his books to Thomas Vowler Short (1790–1872), another Westminster and Christ Church man, who became Bishop of Sodor and Man in 1841 and Bishop of St Asaph in 1846. Short's will appoints his brother, the Rev. William Short, rector of Llandrinio, Montgomery, as his chief heir, but says nothing about his books. Some of them ended up in the St Barnabas Collection of the Theological and Ecclesiastical Library, Flinders University, Adelaide, via the Bishop's cousin Augustus Short (1802–83), again Westminster and Christ Church, and first Bishop of Adelaide (1847–81). In October 2005, through the kindness of Gillian Dooley and Sita Austin, I was able to ascertain that Elmsley's edition is not in the collection. The trail thus goes cold, at least for now.

5. *Elmsley's other work before 1809*

Accounts of Elmsley's scholarly career generally begin in 1809, so it may be worth noting here what he achieved before the edition of the *Acharnians* published in that year. His first book was an edition of Thucydides, published in Edinburgh by William Laing in 1804.¹⁵ The typeface of this edition is the same as that of the edition of Sophocles, which was handled by the same publisher. Elmsley was working on the notes to his Thucydides by at least 29 September 1803 (Laing 3021). It appears that at first his involvement was limited to correcting the work of other scholars. By 9 April 1804 (Laing 3032–33) he was so disgusted by the notes written by George Dunbar (Professor of Greek at Edinburgh from 1806 to 1851) that he recommended that they be discarded. He himself was to add a new preface, "in which I will inform the publick, that I have made no alterations, orthographical excepted, in which the reading which I have received is not better supported by MSS.

¹⁵ [P. Elmsley], *Thucydides Graece & Latine. Accedunt indices, ex editione Wassii et Dukeri. Edinburgi: excudebat Gulielmus Laing. MDCCCIV.* See further n.12.

than that which I have expunged.”¹⁶ This corresponds with the Preface of the published volume (pp. iii–v Lectori S(alutem), dated Ides of (i.e. 15) May 1804, written at Edinburgh, signed P. E.), in which the editor explains that the text is based on the Aldine with changes based not so much on conjectural emendation as on manuscripts collated by Hudson and Duke (who had nevertheless kept to Stephanus’ text). However, he emphasises that “Atticas dictionum formas, quas satis diligenter immutarunt librarii, contra omnium codicum auctoritatem restitui. erunt fortasse qui me, hac saltem in parte operis, paullo audaciorem fuisse existimabunt” (p. v). After a time, he says, he will bring out a “variantium lectionum et annotationum delectum” (p. v.) in a separate volume. So far as I know this never appeared.

The reference to the *Medea* (in Wynn letter 792 [Edinburgh, 10 June 1803], cited above) is especially interesting, given that Elmsley later published an edition of this play in Oxford in 1818 (2nd ed. 1828). The 1818 preface makes no reference to an earlier version, nor does there appear to be any mention of it elsewhere. This means either that it was never completed, or that all surviving copies have been lost or destroyed. The latter alternative need not imply deliberate suppression. School editions are notorious for their lack of durability, and even the commonest of nineteenth-century textbooks now often survive in only a handful of copies.

Whether or not he completed an early edition of the *Medea*, Elmsley did not neglect Euripides during this period. An anonymous edition of Euripides’ *Electra*¹⁷ now in the Bodleian Library (shelfmark Auct. S inf. 1.11) which once belonged to him contains many manuscript emendations in his hand, some of which have not been seen before, and some of which anticipate the work of later scholars.¹⁸ The Bodleian and British

¹⁶ Laing’s response agreeing to this is contained in his letter cited in n.12.

¹⁷ Εὐριπίδου Ἠλέκτρα. Euripidis Electra. Ex editione Musgravii. Cum variarum lectionum delectu, in usum Scholæ Regiæ Westmonasteriensis. Oxonii: e Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1806. The volume is 63 pages long.

¹⁸ See my article “Unpublished Emendations by Peter Elmsley on Euripides and Aristophanes,” *CQ* (forthcoming).

Library catalogues attribute the book to Elmsley, although there is no external evidence to support this. Its text contains one noteworthy emendation (at 1141, δαίμοσιν θύειν σε χροή in place of transmitted χροή σε δαίμοσιν θύη, a change normally attributed to Paley).

Two other similar editions of Euripides are mistakenly attributed to Elmsley in the Durham University Library Catalogue. One is of the *Alcestis*, dated to 1806 (Durham Palace Green Library, Routh 21.D.23); the other is of the *Andromache*, dated to 1807 (*ib.* 64.M.10/11). But the British Library copies are both attributed to Thomas Gaisford (995.f.21.(3.) and 998.f.16 respectively); and while both these volumes are of a similar format to that of the *Electra* (e.g. each is “in usum Scholae Regiae Westmonasteriensis”), they share various features not found in the *Electra* edition (e.g. the date on the title page is given in Roman rather than Arabic numerals, and the brief commentary contains several references to authors such as Hesychius and the Etymologica which we associate more with Gaisford than with Elmsley). J. H. Monk attributes the 1806 *Alcestis* to Gaisford in his own edition of the play (Cambridge 1816, in his “Notarum Explicatio,” on an unnumbered page). An imperfect copy of the *Andromache* edition can be found among Elmsley’s papers in the Bodleian (MS Clar. Press 46, fols. 229–270; it breaks off at p.80, at our line 1116). It contains a bookseller’s plate on the inside cover (“La pareillé, Rue Coquillère, No. 18,” presumably Paris), which implies that Elmsley bought it on his travels, and thus is unlikely to have written it himself.¹⁹

¹⁹ For the reader’s convenience, I add a list of Elmsley’s classical publications in periodicals during this period:

Review of C. G. Heyne (ed.), *Homeri Carmina* (Leipzig and London 1802), *The Edinburgh Review* vol. 2 no. 4 (July 1803) 308–329.

Review of J. Schweighäuser (ed.), *Athenaei Naucratis Deipnosophistarum libri quindecim* (Strasbourg 1801), *The Edinburgh Review* vol. 3 no. 5 (October 1803) 181–194.

Review of C. J. Blomfield (ed.), *Aeschyli Prometheus Vincetus* (Cambridge 1810), *The Edinburgh Review* vol. 17 no. 33 (November 1810) 211–242.

Review of R. Porson (ed.), *Euripidis Hecuba* (London 1808), *The Edinburgh Review* vol. 19 no. 37 (November 1811) 64–95.

Review of J. Markland (ed.) *Euripidis Supplices Mulieres* (Oxford 1811) and

6. *The alleged suppression of the Acharnians edition in 1809*

The edition of Sophocles is not the only book which Elmsley is said to have suppressed. Writing of his edition of Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, Burton states that "this book is now very scarce, and perhaps not to be bought; for not long after it had been published, Dr. Elmsley, for some reason or other, became dissatisfied with it, and called in all the copies which he could find."²⁰ According to [Burgess] 414 (n.7 above; repeated by Sandys, *History* 394) Elmsley's motivation is more sinister: he tried to suppress the book because it had become known that he had stolen emendations from Porson, but he was foiled by publication of the volume at Leipzig.

Neither the alleged suppression nor the alleged plagiarism is certain, however. Horsfall cites letters to Elmsley from Monk and Gaisford (both 1813) commiserating him on the small sales of his edition, and Clarke plausibly suggests that "the poor sales were the cause of the story that he had tried to suppress the

Euripidis Iphigenia in Aulide et in Tauris (Oxford 1811), *Quarterly Review* vol. 7 no. 14 (June 1812) 441–464.

Addendum to above, *Quarterly Review* vol. 8 no. 15 (September 1812) 229–230.

Review of J. H. Monk (ed.), *Euripidis Hippolytus Coronifer* (Cambridge 1811), *Quarterly Review* vol. 8 no. 15 (September 1812) 215–228.

Review of J. G. J. Hermann (ed.), *Euripidis Hercules Furens* (Leipzig 1810), *Classical Journal* vol. 8 no. 15 (September 1813) 199–218.

Review of J. G. J. Hermann (ed.), *Euripidis Supplices* (Leipzig 1811) [part 1], *Classical Journal* vol. 8 no. 16 (December 1813) 417–440.

Review of J. G. J. Hermann (ed.), *Euripidis Supplices* (Leipzig 1811) [part 2], *Classical Journal* vol. 9 no. 17 (1814) 49–64.

"Notes on the Ajax of Sophocles," *Museum Criticum* 3 (April 1814), 351–369 and 4 (December 1814) 469–488.

"Annotatio in Euripidis Iphigeniam Tauricam ex recensione Aug. Seidleri," *Museum Criticum* 6 (May 1816) 273–307.

The *Museum Criticum* articles were reprinted in Cambridge in 1826. For the dates of the original numbers of this journal (as used above) see C. Stray "From One Museum to Another: the *Museum Criticum* (1813–26) and the *Philological Museum* (1831–33)," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 37 (2004) 289–314, at 298–299.

²⁰ Burton (n.3 above) 284. Cf. B. B. Rogers, *The Acharnians of Aristophanes* (London 1910) 191–192: "he was himself so dissatisfied with it that he suppressed it before very many copies had been sold."

edition.”²¹ As for the charge of plagiarism, “it cannot be established for certain that Elmsley was guiltless, but it would be reasonable to suppose that Porson’s suspicions were based on some misunderstanding, and that the whole affair was magnified by academic gossip.”²² In the Laing correspondence letter 3044–47 (Gower Street, London, 29 April 1805) Elmsley disclaims any interest in continuing the edition of Herodotus begun by Porson.²³ His last reason (aside from lack of ability in Ionic Greek and the likelihood that credit for such an edition would accrue to the publisher rather than the author) “arises from a feeling of delicacy with respect to Porson, which is founded on particular circumstances which it is unnecessary to develop.” This predates the alleged theft of Porson’s emendations, and may suggest some antipathy between the two men. Hostility is also implied by the following note on the first page of Elmsley’s copy of Porson’s *Hecuba* (London 1808, reprinted 1811), now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (shelfmark Auct. S. infr. 1.13): “Μισῶ σοφιστήν, ὅστις οὐχ αὐτῷ σοφός. [= Eur. fr. 905 Kannicht] [New line] ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ μὴν Cho. 187.” It is possible that any such hostility would be carried on by Porson’s self-designated successors after his death in 1808, thus leading to the accusations of plagiarism.

Elmsley refers to the edition of the *Achaeians* in a letter from the Wynn correspondence (number 811, 19 Great Ormond Street, 23 October 1809): “I expect to day from Oxford the last sheet of a play of Aristophanes, which I have printed there with a very learned commentary containing almost every thing which I know,” and asking his correspondent whether he should send a copy to Lord Grenville. Subsequent letters (812–814, dated 27 December 1809, 10 January 1810, 19 February 1810) do not refer to the book, but we cannot draw conclusions from this silence. A letter from Hermann to Elmsley (MS. Clar. Press d. 55, fol. 67 verso; Leipzig, 10 October 1820) gently re-

²¹ Horsfall, *GRBS* 15 (1974) 460–461.

²² Clarke, *Greek Studies* 228.

²³ Laing first attempts to involve Elmsley for this project in the letter mentioned in n.12 above; he there complains that he has “not had a scrape of a pen from R. P. for six months.”

bukes him for his criticisms of his *Acharnians*, and states that his countrymen are unhappy that this edition, together with that of the *Heraclidae*, appears unobtainable.

7. Conclusion

Peter Elmsley's edition of Sophocles shows us that much of the work on which his reputation is based was completed at a far earlier date than we had previously thought. It reminds us what he might have achieved if he had lived longer, and had had time to complete editions of all the plays with commentaries after his epoch-making discovery of **L** (and **K**) during the winter of 1818/9. Perhaps most of all, it shows how ignorant we still are of the lives and publications of even the greatest of classical scholars. If a complete edition of Sophocles by Peter Elmsley could have disappeared from the record, what other treasures remain for us still to discover?²⁴

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