

M. DAVIES AND P. J. FINGLASS (edd., trans., comm.). *Stesichorus: The poems*. Cambridge classical texts and commentaries, 54. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Xiv + 691 pp. ISBN 978-11-0707-834-5.

Davies and Finglass provide a complete edition of Stesichorus, with introduction, Greek text and *apparatus criticus*, commentary and bibliography (I am not sure why the word “Translation” appears on the title page, since my version has no translation). The edition offers a new enumeration system, and while this is never an easy adjustment the change is necessary in light of the multiple numeration schemes available until now. A concordance to the edition of Davies<sup>1</sup> is provided.

The work is co-authored in the sense that Finglass, with help from Davies, reworked Davies’ 1979 Oxford dissertation into “not a revised or updated version of the original dissertation, but a new book in its own right, a work of genuine collaboration” (xii).<sup>2</sup> Authorship of each section of the book is clearly stated in the table of contents. In addition, a number of noted scholars contributed assistance and their contributions are noted by initials (e.g. “MLW” represents “M. L. West, *per litteras*” (612). Finglass contributed the Greek text and apparatus, and we are informed that “the newly-numbered fragments should be cited simply as ‘Stesichorus fr. 1 Finglass’ etc.” (xii).

The authors’ presentations are generous and conservative. Multiple viewpoints are presented for each issue, with copious annotation, and many questions are left open for future researchers. It is not uncommon to read statements such as “This [reference to sea travel] could be the Greeks’ return from Tenedos, Aeneas’ intended voyage to the west, the original voyage to Troy of the Greeks, or of Paris and Helen, or something quite different” (453, on **121** from the *Sack of Troy*). The result of such intellectual generosity is, for the reviewer at least, a feeling of confidence in the text and interpretations offered.

The introduction takes up the vexing issue of Stesichorus’ date, placing his activity to “some of the period between 610 and 540” (6). Extensive information is presented about Himera, with its mixture of Doric and Ionic peoples, and about other areas associated with Stesichorus, as well as the poet’s life and works. Dialect and recitation of his work in antiquity are also discussed. In each case generous citation is offered. The authors take the position that

<sup>1</sup> M. Davies, ed., *Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, Oxford 1991, I.

<sup>2</sup> As in the work reviewed, page numbers are here cited in bare Roman type, fragment numbers in bold.

Stesichorus' poetry was choral. To the reviewer, the most interesting part of Finglass' discussion of style is a treatment of Stesichorus' "redundancy."

Finglass' Greek text is complete (327 numbered fragments) and conservative. Only what Finglass is reasonably sure Stesichorus wrote is printed. The apparatus is brief; generally only proposals accepted into the text and the relevant MS readings are reported, with rejected proposals treated in the commentary. Finglass is sparing of his own emendations and supplements; for example, in the apparatus to *Thebais?* (the title is not certain) the name "Finglass" appears only once, while the name "Parsons" appears more than twenty times. One might lament that more of Finglass' work was not put into the text; for example, in the commentary to line 255 of *Thebais?* Finglass introduces his own proposal with the word "perhaps" and then rejects the other proposals made for the line (388).

The collection begins with fragments from known works, printed in Greek alphabetical order (1-186), then "*Fragmenta Incerti Carminis*" (187-321), followed by "*Fragmenta Fortasse Stesichorea*" (322-25) and "*Fragmenta Spuria*" (326-27). Five fragments are printed which do not have fragment numbers in Davies' edition: 185-86 (*Boarhunters*, from P.Oxy 2359), 293 (a commentary from P.Oxy. but previously not published), and 321 and 325 (the first a commentary from P.Oxy. 2506 placed among "*Fragmenta Incerti Carminis*," the latter also a commentary but from P.Oxy. 5094 and placed among "*Fragmenta Fortasse Stesichorea*"). Within individual works the fragments which can be placed in order are presented first, followed by miscellaneous fragments. When possible the fragments are grouped under one number (e.g. 91a-91g on Stesichorus' blinding). Late citations are occasionally branded as "derivative" and printed in the commentary but not in the text. Some of these have had (and will have) defenders, although the passages will now not have fragment numbers assigned.

The commentary provides copious information on the myths of each work and on Stesichorus' contributions to the stories. The metrical analyses are particularly informative, as the authors document in detail the processes used to reconstruct patterns from papyri which are often in very poor condition. The metrical schemes are then used to deduce placement of the smaller fragments, which in turn contribute to the overall understanding of the larger fragments. The authors believe that the theme of *The Games for Pelias* arose in visual art in response to "foundation, or refoundation, of the panhellenic competitions" (217) and that the myth was treated in now lost epic. The many *Geryoneis* fragments are persuasively reconstructed, with the many smaller fragments placed at the end and not commented upon (the edition of Curtis, which must have become available to the authors very late, only prints 26 of the 79 fragments in Finglass' collection).<sup>3</sup> The editors treat

<sup>3</sup> P. Curtis, *Stesichoros's Geryoneis*, Leiden and Boston 2011.

*Helen* and *Palinodes* together and extensively (forty-five pages of commentary by both authors on Finglass' five pages of fragments, mostly *testimonia*). The authors hold for two *Palinodes*, but are not able to reconstruct much of the second. For *Thebais?*, or the "Lille Stesichorus," the authors accept the ordering of Lloyd-Jones and Parsons and comment that "The new text presented by Parsons's article has *de facto* become the *editio princeps*" (368) along with Ancher's supplement from P.Lille 111 C.<sup>4</sup> Particularly masterful is the reconstruction and interpretation of *Oresteia* from eleven fragments; the authors see this poem as particularly influential upon later poetry such as Attic tragedy.

The "*Fragmenta Incerti Carminis*" are of two types: **187-269**, from P.Oxy 3876 and for which there is an introduction, and **270-321**, miscellaneous material from a variety of sources. The authors are pessimistic about discovering the mythological content of the former, although a number are far from hopeless (e.g. **191**, apparently Meleager and Althaea, or **196** and **203**, perhaps the same story, or **247**, where a tantalizing variety of myths is suggested by Finglass in the commentary). The authors occasionally speculate on the source works. Some of the fragments in this section might be better among "*Fragmenta Fortasse Stesichorea*"; **222**, for example, arouses as much doubt concerning authorship as **324**. "*Fragmenta Spuria*" is reserved for fragments belonging to *works* which are spurious, namely *Calyce* and *Rhadine*. The authors place at the end of the commentary some "Fragments Conjecturally Ascribed to Stesichorus," 8 fragments "where the conjecture is far from certain" (606); these pieces are neither printed with the fragments nor assigned Finglass numbers.

The bibliography, which encompasses 68 pages and approximately 1700 items, is somewhat difficult to use, being divided into 5 categories: "Abbreviations: Reference Works"; "Abbreviations: Scholars' Names"; "Editions and Commentaries on Stesichorus"; "Works Cited by Author's Name"; and "Works Cited by Author's Name with Date." There is occasional confusion, as for example when one encounters a citation of "Denniston" with page number, it is unclear whether to look under the first, second or third category since Denniston produced various types of work, although not an edition or commentary on Stesichorus (it is in fact in the first category, but the only abbreviation in that category consisting of a surname). The "Index of Subjects" does not include ancient authors and the "Index of Greek" is sparse. Perhaps an *index locorum*, a full *index verborum* and a list of papyri would have extended the length of the book unduly.

<sup>4</sup> P. J. Parsons, "The 'Lille Stesichorus'", *ZPE* 26, 1977, 7-36 (documenting Lloyd-Jones' contribution); G. Ancher, "P.Lille IIIIC + P.Lille 76 abc (+ 73)", *ZPE* 30, 1978, 27-35.

This work will be an indispensable tool for anyone reading Stesichorus at any level of proficiency.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank the University of Tulsa for an appointment as Emeritus Professor and the University of Washington for an appointment as Visiting Scholar.