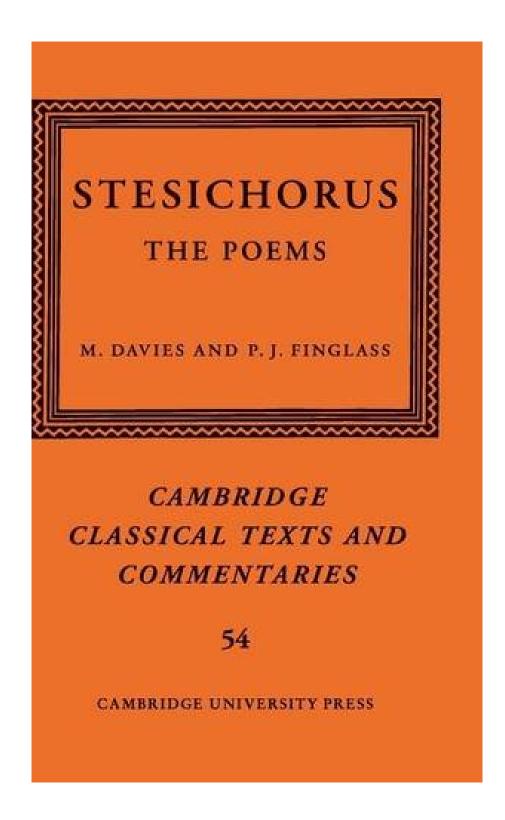


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Review

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Stesichorus' lyric poetry vividly recreates the most dramatic episodes of Greek myth: the labours of Heracles, the sack of Troy, the vengeance of Orestes, and more besides. It can be appreciated today as never before, thanks to the recent discovery of ancient manuscripts buried for some two millennia in the sands of Egypt. This fresh edition of Stesichorus' poems presents the first full-scale analysis of all his surviving works. The detailed introduction and commentary investigate a wide range of key issues, such as Stesichorus' imagery and style, his narrative technique, and his mythological innovations. The controversial question of how Stesichorus' poems were originally performed receives careful scrutiny; particular attention is paid to the fascinating story of the transmission, disappearance, and recovery of his work. A translation integrated with the commentary renders this book accessible to all readers with an interest in early Greek poetry and its legacy.

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This is strictly a scholar's book, not for general consumption. The advertisement made it seem as though the book included translations. There are translations, but one line or one fragment at a time buried amidst voluminous commentary and practically impossible to ferret out. The translations are competent, but hardly poetic. I was terribly disappointed with this book. It goes really little further with the existing Stesichorus oeuvre than the Loeb Classics series from years before as far as I can see. Maybe classics scholars will see it differently.

The quality of the book production is excellent, of course, which explains the high price. Scholars of ancient Greek poetry, especially Stesichorus experts, will no doubt find this a fascinating read. The historical commentary for each fragment is rigorous and excellent as far as this lay reader can tell. This is really for the expert, the graduate student, post-doc or professor of classics literature.

Because it is so well produced, I gave it three stars, though personally I would have given it only one star for false advertising and my overall disappointment.

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