

## INTRODUCTION

The reader in search of an up-to-date general overview of Sophocles does not have to look far. Introductions for the beginner are readily available.<sup>1</sup> Two massive companion volumes were published in 2012.<sup>2</sup> Since 2003 six of the seven plays of Sophocles which have reached us complete have had a Companion published by Duckworth, latterly Bloomsbury.<sup>3</sup> There is an excellent survey of Sophocles in the same series as the present book.<sup>4</sup> Helpful introductions preface translations of, or commentaries on, Sophocles' plays.<sup>5</sup> Major monographs written over the past century provide detailed overviews.<sup>6</sup> Those in search of further resources can consult the nine bibliographies on Sophocles (one on each of the seven plays, plus one on all fragments, plus one on Sophocles as a whole) published by *Oxford Bibliographies Online*.<sup>7</sup>

This book is offered to complement such resources, not to replace them. It contains several relatively short chapters on different aspects of the overall subject, each providing an analysis illuminated by recent scholarship. Its intended audience is mixed. I hope that professional scholars working on Greek tragedy will read it, though it is not written with them primarily in mind. Rather, I am thinking of postgraduates needing direction in a new field of study; of advanced undergraduates encountering Sophocles either in the original Greek or in translation who want some context for their studies; of teachers of Classics, again whether teachers of Greek or of classical civilization, who may have tackled Sophocles at university in the past and would like a convenient recent guide and stimulus; and of scholars in other fields and readers more generally, who have come across Sophocles in translation and would like to think more about his works. The book does not shy

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Morwood 2008; Garvie 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Markantonatos 2012a; Ormand 2012 (compared by Coe 2013a).

<sup>3</sup> Hesk 2003 (*Ajax*); Levett 2004 (*Women of Trachis*); Lloyd 2005 (*Electra*); Roisman 2005 (*Philoctetes*); Kelly 2008 (*Oedipus at Colonus*); Cairns 2016 (*Antigone*).

<sup>4</sup> Buxton 1984, reprinted with additional discussion as Buxton 1995 (see pp. 37–42).

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Easterling 2008; Griffith 1999: 1–4.

<sup>6</sup> See Perrotta 1935; Reinhardt 1947 ≈ 1979; Winnington-Ingram 1980; Segal 1981, 1995. Also Webster 1936a (revised 1969); Whitman 1951; Kirkwood 1958; Knox 1964; Gellie 1972; Jouanna 2007 ≈ 2018. The chorus in particular has seen several detailed treatments: Burton 1980; Gardiner 1987; Kitzinger 2008; Rodighiero 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Scodel 2009; Finglass 2017h, 2017j, 2017k, 2017l, 2018c, 2018d, 2018h, 2018i.

away from extensive citation and close interaction with Sophocles' text; but all Greek is translated, and in discussions of the Greek I hope that the key issues at stake are brought out as fully as possible for the benefit of all.

The book has two parts. The first, 'Transmission', contains three broadly historical chapters, which look at Sophocles' career, the reception of his works in antiquity, and the passage of his works from medieval manuscripts into modern editions, concluding with an examination of differences and disagreements between those editions. How did we end up with the texts that we have? What are they based on? How reliable are they as guides to what Sophocles wrote? These are the kinds of question which this part explores.<sup>8</sup> The second part, 'Interpretation', offers nine broadly literary chapters, examining (with considerable thematic overlap) different aspects of Sophocles' dramas. Each begins with close analysis (sometimes brief, sometimes at length) of a passage from Sophocles' plays (except for Chapter 5, which opens with a passage from comedy that comments on tragedy). Some chapters are then arranged around discussion of several passages, others rely more on a sketch of different scholars' approaches; all are intended to give readers a flavour of some of the issues at stake, to indicate where further guidance can be found, and to suggest new paths for research, Sophoclean scholarship being very much a work in progress. No chapter provides anything like a full overview of its subject matter. My particular interests, and biases, will be apparent throughout; the richness of Sophocles' poetry means that any survey of his plays will be partial.

Throughout, the volume incorporates wherever possible the fragmentary plays within the discussion.<sup>9</sup> The great collection of the fragments by Stefan Radt, published in 1977 and updated in 1999, will long remain the standard critical edition.<sup>10</sup> Radt's enviable philology has been literally fundamental, providing a starting point for less massive works which have made Sophoclean fragments more accessible to audiences in search of something handier (and cheaper) than a full-scale scholarly edition; the same is true of the other volumes in the

<sup>8</sup> The section does not survey the modern reception of the plays, a topic that would need a volume to itself: see Lauriola and Demetriou 2017, Finglass in press 3, and the bibliographies on Sophocles mentioned in the previous note, each of which lists recent works on the reception of individual dramas.

<sup>9</sup> Two recent key surveys: Sommerstein 2012a; Hahnemann 2012.

<sup>10</sup> *T>GF* IV. See Radt 1983 = 2002: 263–92 = Hofmann 1991: 79–109; Kassel 1991a = 1991b: 88–98 ≈ 2005: 7–20.

series *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta (TrGF)*, especially the editions of Aeschylus (by Radt, 1985) and Euripides (by Richard Kannicht, 2004). Subsequent to these editions, the arrival of excellent Loeb Classical Library volumes on the fragments of the ‘Big Three’ tragedians, and Aris & Phillips commentaries on many separate dramas by Sophocles and Euripides, as well as a textually acute Oxford Classical Text of the most substantial tragic fragments, means that these works are now available to a wider range of readers than ever.<sup>11</sup> There are also several edited collections of essays centred on tragic fragments, including one devoted to Sophoclean fragments edited by Alan Sommerstein.<sup>12</sup> Scholarship like this makes it easier for readers to engage with material too important to be left to specialists.

In the past, monographs on Sophocles have tended to show relatively little interest in fragments. Reinhardt’s *Sophokles* concludes with a few pages looking briefly at *Eurypylos*, *Women of Colchis*, *Nausicaa*, and *Ichneutae (The Trackers)*.<sup>13</sup> Perrotta’s *Sofocle* has a chapter on *Ichneutae* alongside chapters on the seven complete plays; more recently, Jouanna’s also takes the fragments seriously.<sup>14</sup> But in general most monographs never really go beyond the seven plays that we happen to have in full, and sometimes state this explicitly as a policy.<sup>15</sup> Yet as Katerina Zacharia put it, ‘it is a serious error to generalize about Sophocles without taking the fragmentary plays into account. The point may seem obvious, but it is surprising how many monographs on Sophocles take the form of a chapter on each of the surviving plays followed by a Conclusion. *Tereus* alone should be enough to warn against such implied complacency.’<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Loeb: Lloyd-Jones 2003 for Sophocles; Sommerstein 2008 for Aeschylus; Collard and Cropp 2008 for Euripides. Aris and Phillips volumes: Sommerstein and Talbot 2012, and Sommerstein, Fitzpatrick, and Talbot 2006 for Sophocles; Collard, Cropp, and Lee 1995, and Collard, Cropp, and Gibert 2004 for Euripides; O’Sullivan and Collard 2013 for the major fragment of satyr play. Oxford Classical Text: Diggle 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Hofmann 1991; Sommerstein 2003 (with Allan 2004; Wright 2004); McHardy, Robson, and Harvey 2005; Cousland and Hume 2009; Finglass and Coe 2019a.

<sup>13</sup> Reinhardt 1947: 233–9 ≈ 1979: 225–31.

<sup>14</sup> Perrotta 1935; Jouanna 2007 ≈ 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Kirkwood 1958: 30: ‘In not one of the many lost plays... can we say with any degree of certainty exactly what parts of the story Sophocles used or how he put his play together. We come closer to such knowledge of *Eurypylos* than of any other fragmentary tragedy; but even in it, except for scattered places, we can only guess about the precise material and organization.’ Also Whitman 1951, unpaginated Preface: ‘Little or nothing will be found herein about the lost plays – an omission which may be justly censured... the fragments of Sophocles afford us only a hazy view of the lost works, and it is with great trepidation that I have once or twice made use of them in trying to sketch the poet’s development.’

<sup>16</sup> Zacharia 2001: 110. For *Tereus* see pp. 53–4, 73–9, 102 below.

The second edition of Webster's monograph is an exception, but his discussions of fragmentary plays there go well beyond the evidence into the realm of speculation.<sup>17</sup> Caution is indeed required when dealing with fragmentary texts, but that is no reason to disregard them altogether, not least as, in the case of Sophocles, they contain scenes every bit as moving as anything to be found in the plays which have been preserved complete. Gods shooting arrows from on high at innocent, terrified girls; a mother bitterly lamenting a child whose death she herself has caused; a woman on the verge of discovering that her sister has been raped by her husband – should texts like these really be restricted to professional scholars?

The time therefore seems ripe for a book which takes into account Sophocles' oeuvre as far as we have it. (This is another reason for beginning with the transmission, since during the first six or seven hundred years of that process, audiences and readers had far more Sophocles to choose from and appreciate than we do today; the title of this book, 'Sophocles', has had different meanings and has stood for different corpora down the centuries.) This is a felicitous moment to conduct such an analysis, given the insights offered by the recent *Tereus* fragment (*POxy.* 5292, depicted on the cover of this book); but there are other papyri lengthy enough to sustain analysis of stagecraft, language, myth, and more besides. Some quoted fragments, too, can shed considerable light on their respective plays. I hope that this book will stimulate more substantial work on Sophocles in which fragmentary evidence will play its part; and will also convey the excitement of working with rediscovered texts, lost for centuries, which offer new perspectives on Sophocles' inimitable artistry.

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Translations are my own, taken from my editions for *Ajax*, *Electra*, and *Oedipus the King* where possible; they have no literary pretensions. I have been influenced throughout by the translations found in Jebb's editions of the individual plays, by Barrett's edition of the difficult *Niobe* fragment, by other commentaries, and by Lloyd-Jones's

<sup>17</sup> Webster 1969; see Lloyd-Jones 1970. For the challenges of working with fragmentary evidence see Most 2009 (and the essays in Most 1997), Finglass and Coe 2019b. One recent piece which does draw on the full range of evidence, including fragments, to illuminate its topic (stagecraft) is the pathbreaking Marshall 2012.

Loeb.<sup>18</sup> A list of abbreviations for collections of papyri and other commonly referenced items is given at the beginning of the bibliography.

A few comments on the layout of papyrological texts may be in order. A dot printed under a letter means that there is some doubt as to whether this is in fact the letter represented on the papyrus; a dot underneath an empty space indicates that ink from a letter is present, but the letter in question cannot be read. Gaps on the papyrus are represented by square brackets, [ ]; attempts by scholars to fill in such gaps are found within the brackets. When a gap on a papyrus can be filled in thanks to a quotation found in an ancient author which coincides with the text on the papyrus, the text thus added to the papyrus text is placed within half square brackets,  $\lfloor \rfloor$ . When letters, including speaker designations, are printed that are not found on the papyrus, they are placed within angle brackets,  $\langle \rangle$ .

One remark on the recording of chronology: an ancient date in the form '264/3' means not 'at some point during the twenty-four months comprising what we call the calendar years 264 and 263' but 'during a year in the Attic calendar which began during what we call 264, and ended during what we call 263'.

<sup>18</sup> Jebb 1892, 1893, 1894, 1896, 1898, 1900a, 1900b; W. Barrett 1974; Lloyd-Jones 1997, 1998, 2003 (revised impressions of the original volumes from 1994, 1994, and 1996, which contain mistakes).