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Laura Carrara, *L'indovino Poliido. Eschilo, Le Cretesi. Sofocle, Manteis. Euripide, Poliido (Pleiadi 17; Rome 2014).*

Among all the figures of Greek myth, Polyidus is not exactly a household name. In Apollodorus' account (*Bibl.* 3.17-20), he was a seer who came to the aid of Minos, after Minos' son Glaucus had fallen into a vat of honey while chasing a mouse; Minos was then told by the Curetes that his son would be brought back to life by the person who came up with the best comparison for a three-coloured cow that Minos had in his herds. Polyidus compared it to a blackberry, and was then told by Minos that he had to revivify his son. After being shut up with the corpse, he killed a snake that was making its way towards the dead boy, only to see a second snake bring its fellow back to life by spreading a herb over its body; Polyidus applied the same herb to Glaucus and achieved the same result. Minos then forbade him from returning home until he taught his son prophecy, which he did; but when after completing his lessons he was sailing away, he told Glaucus to spit on his mouth, which caused him to forget what he had learned.

Polyidus' lack of celebrity is no doubt in part due to the near-total disappearance of tragedies which featured him: Aeschylus' *Cretan Women*, Sophocles' *Seers*, and Euripides' *Polyidus*. In this book Laura Carrara has expertly edited the fragments of these plays, and equipped them with a detailed introduction and commentary; the result is a volume of high quality that should certainly put Polyidus back on the map.

After acknowledgements, a preface, and a conspectus of manuscripts cited, Carrara's book begins with an Introduction of nearly forty pages giving an account of Polyidus in archaic and classical literature and art. There follows the main part of the

book, a discussion of the three plays, in turn: forty pages on Aeschylus' *Cretan Women*, a hundred and twenty pages on Sophocles' *Manteis*, and a hundred and seventy pages on Euripides' *Polyidus*. The space devoted to the three tragedies indicates the relative surviving proportions of their plays. For each play there is an introduction, followed by a text of the fragments with facing Italian translation (including a translation of the immediate context of all the quoted fragments), and then the commentary on individual fragments. After that come two appendices: one on fragments of uncertain attribution, another on the *Polyidos* of Johann August Apel (1805). The book is concluded by a bibliography, and two indexes: one of names, one of passages cited.

Cararra is a thorough and shrewd guide to these difficult texts, giving full guides to previous scholarship and much intelligent discussion in her commentary. She has checked not just the papyri, but also, where possible, the manuscripts of classical authors who cite the fragments that she is editing, whether *in situ* or via facsimile, microfilm, or online (p. xviii). Just one example will serve as evidence for her skill as an editor. Her fr. 646b οἴσθ' οὖν ὁ δρᾶσον; is attested in Σ Ar. *Thesm.* 870 (p. 50.5-6 Regtuit) and in Gregory of Corinth *De Dialectis* 2 (pp. 15-20 Schaefer). It appeared as fr. 647 in Nauck, *TrGF*¹ (1856), but was excluded by Nauck from *TrGF*² (1889); pointing to the variant reading in Gregory where *Polyidus* was replaced by *Polydorus*, Nauck argued (*TrGF*², p. xxi) that the citation came in fact from *Hec.* 225 (i.e. that Gregory mistakenly referred to *Hecuba* as *Polydorus*) and thus is not a fragment. Kannicht follows Nauck and excludes the citation from the new *TrGF*. But (i) *Polyidus* is the only title attested in both sources, and is more likely to have been corrupted into the familiar name *Polydorus* than the other way around; (ii) the expression seems to have been common in Euripides, and so there is

no reason why it should not have appeared in *Polyidus* as well as in *Hecuba*; and (iii) the Euripides citation, in both the Aristophanes scholium and in Gregory, follows a full line quotation from Sophocles' *Peleus*, which indicates that whoever originally excerpted these passages had access to plays now lost. Carrara's decision to include the fragment (see her commentary, pp. 385-90), contrary to the practice of editors for more than a century, shows commendable independence of judgment; here someone who consults *TrGF* or the Loeb, but not Carrara, will be missing out.

One of the difficulties involved in dealing with a fragmentary Greek tragedy is what to do with accounts of the myth preserved by ancient authors which are not explicitly stated to have a tragic origin, but where it is a fair hypothesis that at least some of the account does indeed come from the fragmentary tragedy. The two full summaries of the Polyidus myth, by Apollodorus (paraphrased above) and Hyginus (*Fab.* 136), are both included in Carrara's edition – the first as a testimonium to Aeschylus' *Cretan Women*, the second as a testimonium to Euripides' *Polyidus*. One detail found in Hyginus' summary, but not in Apollodorus' – that before Polyidus could revivify Glaucus, he had to discover his body, and he did this by deciphering an omen, an owl (Greek γλαῦξ) over a wine cellar putting some bees to flight – is explicitly stated by Aelian to have come from Euripides' play, and that makes it a fair hypothesis that Hyginus' account has a particularly close relationship with Euripides' drama. Yet it does not follow that other details preserved only in Hyginus must have come from Euripides. And the grounds given for associating Apollodorus' account with Aeschylus' play (p. 69) are weak indeed. Better, I think, to print the accounts of Apollodorus and Hyginus, and other testimonia not explicitly connected to a specific tragedian, in a separate section of testimonia to the myth ahead of the testimonia and fragments associated individually with Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

Commentaries on the three playwrights could then refer back to these texts when required.

It is a pity that the fragments of Aristophanes' *Polyidus* do not feature in Carrara's book, especially as that play may have parodied Euripides' drama of the same name. But when we have been given so much, it seems greedy to want more.

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