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P. J. Finglass, ed., trans., comm.,
Sophocles: Oedipus the King.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. xiv +720. Cloth
(ISBN 978-1-108-41951-2) \$170.00.

P. J. Finglass provides an exhaustive and detailed commentary on one of Sophocles' most celebrated plays, one that Aristotle favored. This commentary follows the author's dramatic commentaries on Sophocles' *Electra* (2007) and *Ajax* (2011). Finglass states that there has been no new critical edition of *OR* with introduction and critical commentary since 1883, and aims to fill this daunting gap with his book. As has been shown in his previous commentaries, Finglass is as careful in his discussions as he is in his textual editing. Even in his disagreements of interpretation or textual choice he keeps an open mind and evaluates every interpretative or textual choice anew. Although he offers his views from every angle, he does not state them as categorical, but allows for the validity of competing opinions. His choice to provide a fairly literal translation for the sentences or phrases he discusses, which amounts in fact to the entire play, is welcome. This approach is helpful to the student who still needs help in understanding the text before embarking on interpretation. Unlike his previous commentaries, here the discussion of single words is included in the larger segment being examined. His consideration of language and style is closely interwoven with analysis of staging and production. Finglass' goal in this commentary is to take us closer to the text of the play used in its first performance. Although we cannot know how close he comes, the journey is worthwhile.

The introduction to the commentary consists of five parts. In the first section, which addresses the date of the first performance, Finglass points out that *OR* is probably the fourth of the seven complete extant plays: *Trachiniai*, *Antigone*, *Ajax*, *OR*. He prefers to date *OR* in 430s, but would not be surprised if evidence were found placing it in the 440s or 420s. However, Finglass rejects using the plague described in the play as a guiding factor for dating the play to the 420s, as claimed by Dindorf and elaborated by Knox. In 'Production and Staging,' Finglass analyzes the assigning of second place to the trilogy which included *OR* and was most likely performed at the City Dionysia. He states that the formal verdict might not necessarily have reflected public opinion. Although he gives a clear description of the setting

of the scene, a schematic illustration would have been a welcome addition to this section. An overview of entrances and exits made by the characters and chorus follows, as well as the division of the speaking parts between the three available actors.

‘Myth and Originality’ discusses the mythic traditions of the Theban cycle and Sophocles’ treatment of the myth. It examines the Theban cycle as it appears in the Homeric epics; Hesiod; the Epic Cycle; lyric poetry of sixth century BCE; fragments of the mythographers; archaic and classical art (although not well represented there other than Oedipus’ encounter with the Sphinx); Pindar; Aeschylus, who treated Oedipus’ legend in a tetralogy in 467 BCE: *Laius, Oedipus Seven against Thebes*, and a satyr-play *Sphinx*, of which only the last part of the trilogy survived; Sophocles, who treated the legend in two plays that survived besides *OR, Antigone*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*, performed on different dates; Euripides, who wrote three plays on the legend: *Oedipus*, written most probably after *OR* but before *Oedipus at Colonus*, surviving only in fragments, the extant *Phoenician Women* of probably 411–09 BCE, and the lost *Chrisippus*; and lastly the mythic variants of the Theban cycle in ‘Other later dramatic treatments.’

In discussing the originality of the Sophoclean treatment of the Theban cycle, Finglass sees the plague that begins the play and the following scene of supplication as Sophocles’ invention. He suggests that this beginning allows the action to fit into a single day and showcases the city and Oedipus’ place within it. By treating the parricide and incest as events occurring in the past, Sophocles is able to focus on the ideas of discovery and recognition. Although the incest must have been a familiar element in this saga, the way that Sophocles weaves it into the play is unique to him. Finglass posits that Sophocles’ *Laius* is not said to have transgressed a divine command. He was not ordered not to have a child, but simply told that if he had a child, that child would kill him, which was a divine prediction, not a command. Comparing other extant fragmentary dramatic treatments of the story of Oedipus, Finglass points out Sophocles’ originality.

In the fourth section, Finglass debates the nature of the play itself. Is *OR* a suppliant drama, a recognition play, a *nostos* tragedy, a foundling narrative, a work of theodicy, or a tragicomedy? He concludes that it is impossible to categorize the entire play under one rubric, but that the variant possibilities of classification “may suggest the richness of the play, the diversity of its themes and moods” (41). The fifth and last section of the Introduction considers the transmission of text and the play’s celebrity from the fourth century on.

As is customary, the commentary divides the text into the traditional performative parts: Prologue, Parodos, first episode, etc., with further divisions according

to content, when appropriate, giving an ample interpretative analysis or metrical analysis when relevant. The notes are a treasure trove of information on both ancient sources and secondary scholarship. The syntax is commented on in detail.

By Finglass' admission his text differs substantially in 56 places from the 1992 revised text by Lloyd-Jones and Wilson. Many of those 56 places have major implications for sense and interpretation. He gives the following lines as examples: 162, 175/5, 230, 463/4, 510/11, 611-12, 624, 625, 677, 892-893/4, 906-907/8, 1196/7, 1453, [1524-30]. Here is an example in which I concur: Finglass' decision to read ἐξ ἄλλης χθονὸς ("is a different person from a different land") rather than Vauvilliers's emendation ἢ ἕξ ἄλλης χθονὸς ("another of you, or a foreigner") followed by Lloyd-Jones/Wilson is indeed preferable since Oedipus has already asked the Thebans to identify Laius' killer from amongst them, and there is no need to repeat the request. I found no case with which I would necessarily be at odds with Finglass regarding the reading and the sense of his preferences.

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John Lombardini,
The Politics of Socratic Humor.

Oakland, CA: The University of California Press, 2018. Pp. 296. Cloth
(ISBN 978-0-520-29103-4) \$95.00.

Lombardini argues that "we can think about the depictions of Socratic humor we find in Aristophanes, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and the Cynics as part of a larger debate, one that encompasses both the nature of Socratic humor and its political significance, as well as the broader questions of the ethics and politics of humor during the classical and Hellenistic periods" (8). This Herculean task is made manageable by focusing primarily on whether these authors see something anti-democratic in Socrates' humor. The material is well organized, intelligently argued, and clearly written. Lombardini's views will have to be taken into account by anyone concerned with Socratic irony, or with the attitudes of these authors towards Socrates. I restrict my