CHAPTER THREE

STESICHORUS

1. *The tradition*

Stesichorus, whom the ancients did not hesitate to call the reincarnation of Homer, was a classic already by the beginning of the fifth century. His poetry was well known, and so was the man. The common opinion held Stesichorus to have been born in Himera in Sicily, but he had connections also with Mataurus, the Locrian colony in South Italy. Tradition knew five names for his father: Euphemus, Euclides, Euphorbus, Hyetes, and Hesiod, and Clymene or Ctemene (Ctimene) for his mother. He had two brothers: a famous geometer Mamercus and Helianax the law-giver. Stesichorus was initiated into poetry by a nightingale,—at his birth the bird sat on his lips and sang a sweet song. Later in his life the poet was temporarily blinded by Helen or the Dioscuri for writing abuse about her, but after he had realised the cause of his sudden blindness, and had written two recantations or *Palinodes*, the goddess restored his sight.

Stesichorus sometimes used his position of poet and singer for shaping the political views of his fellow citizens. Once he warned the Locrians against being presumptuous "lest the cicadas sing from the ground" and another time he admonished the Himereans to reject the tyranny that Phalaris (or Gelon) tried to establish in their city. On yet another occasion he restored peace between adversaries who were drawn up and ready for battle by standing between them and singing to them.

He was called μελοποιός and λυρικός by the ancient authors, and he was known to have composed hymns, fables, bucolic songs, love songs (παίδεια or παιδικά), choral songs to the cithara and possibly also paeans. Stesichorus used old nomes such as the *Chariot* nome and some derivation of the *Orthian* nome, and was much praised for the excellence and grandeur of the settings of his subject matter, for giving his characters dignity, for his use of epithets and variety, and for thematic innovations. On the other hand, he was sometimes held redundant and extravagant, and, in the latter part of the fifth century, also old-fashioned.

At least in later antiquity, an opinion existed that the poet's true name was Tisias, Stesichorus being a nickname or professional title given to him because he was the first to set up a chorus of singers to the cithara. He is reported to have travelled around in South Italy and to some extent perhaps also on the Greek mainland. When Stesichorus was around eighty-five years old, he was killed by a robber called Hicanus, and was buried in Catana near the gate which was later called the Stesichorean Gate.

His works were known to have been compiled in twenty-six books, or rather poems, of which the titles of seventeen are attested by ancient authors. Stesichorus was usually dated to the latter part of the seventh century and the first part of the sixth century, and synchronized with Pythagoras, Simonides, Alcman, Sappho, Alcaeus, and the tyrants Pittacus and Phalaris.

The modern views

The opinions on Stesichorus' biographical tradition and its historical reliability have changed radically during the last century or so, growing more and more sceptical.[1] Still, despite the increasing pessimism, there are a few things in the tradition which seem to be accepted as historically reliable by most modern scholars. First, Stesichorus is almost unanimously thought to have come from Himera, which is the dominant view also in ancient sources. Secondly, many authorities accept the Suda's date for the poet (632–556 BC) even if admitting that it may be based on nothing more than synchronisation with other early poets.[2]

Modern commentators have been interested in some of the topics of the tradition, such as the blindness and the name of the poet, as well as Stesichorus' attitude towards tyranny, and the possibility that the poet travelled around South Italy and to the Peloponnese. The opinions on these particular issues will be discussed below in relevant sections. The development of the tradition in general, however, has been very

[1] Compare the entry "Stesichoros" in RE by Maas, and Dihle's opinion that: "… practically nothing is known about the poet's life" (1994:45). See also Lefkowitz 1981:32.

[2] DMB s.v. *Stesichorus*, OCD 2nd and 3rd eds. s.v. *Stesichorus*, Bowra 1961:74–76, Campbell 1967:253 f., West 1971a:302–306, Podlecki 1984:157, Burkert 1987:51, Dihle 1991:45, Gerber 1997:234, Kurke 200:80, Hutchinson 2001:116, *et al.* Martin West's study (1971a:302–306) of different traditional and archaeological data, which led to more or less the same result, *viz.* that Stesichorus was active around 560–540, has probably helped the Suda's date to survive.

seldom touched upon by modern authors. Only a few scholars have taken an interest in it: West has very rightly emphasized the numerous links between Stesichorean and Pythagorean traditions, and Wilamowitz noticed the existence of the separate Locrian and Himerean traditions.[3]

2. *Stesichorus' family*

Five different names for Stesichorus' father are attested in tradition: Euphemus, Euphorbus, Hyetes or Euetes, Euclides, and Hesiod. The first three seem to belong in the Pythagorean tradition. Euphemus, who is first mentioned by Plato, and later by Stephanus of Byzantium and the Suda, appears later in Iamblichus' list of early Pythagoreans, mentioned among the Metapontians with the Pythagoreans/Orphic poets Brontinus and Zopyrus who seem to have had an important role in the development of Hesiod's tradition.[4] Euphorbus as Stesichorus' father is attested only by the Suda.[5] According to the Pythagorean tradition, Euphorbus was a previous incarnation of Pythagoras, who wounded Patroclus and was himself wounded or killed by Menelaus in the Trojan War.[6] The third name for the poet's father, Hyetes in the Suda, is often emended into Euetes on the grounds that all other names for Stesichorus' father (except Hesiod) begin with Eu-. It may be relevant that Iamblichus' list includes one Euetes among the Pythagoreans from (Epizephyrean) Locris.[7]

A different tradition seems to lie behind the name Euclides as the father of Stesichorus attested on an inscription on a headless herm from Tivoli, and in the Suda.[8] According to Thucydides, Euclides was one of

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[3] West 1971a:302 f., Wilamowitz 1913:234–238, 1937:61 with n. 1.

[4] Pl. *Phaedr.* 244a, Steph. Byz. s.v. Μάταυρος, Suda s.v. Στησίχορος, and also epigr. anon. ap. Σ Pind. (1.10.12 sq. Dr.), Iambl. *VP* 63. According to Charax' genealogy (see p. 15), Homer had a great-great-great-grandfather called Euphemus (Suda s.v. Ὅμηρος). For more about Brontinus and Zopyrus see p. 35.

[5] Suda s.v. Στησίχορος.

[6] *Il.* 16.806–815, 17.9–60; Iambl. *VP* 63, Heracl. fr. 89 Wehrli, Diog. L. 8.4, see also Burkert 1972:138–141.

[7] Suda s.v. Στησίχορος. The emendation εὐέτους *pro* ὑέτους was done by Wilamowitz 1913:236 n. 2, see also West 1971a:303. Wilamowitz believed the names Euphorbus and Euetes to be erroneous derivations from Euclides and Euphemus (*ibid.*), but it is equally plausible that the names come from different traditions or versions of the traditions.

[8] IG 14.1213, Suda s.v. Στησίχορος.

the founders of Himera.[9] Thus, the Himerean tradition seem to have linked the most famous poet of the city with its *oikistes*.

The information that Hesiod was the father of Stesichorus is closely linked to the Ozolean Locris' tradition of Hesiod's death.[10] It may be that Stesichorus was attached to the Ozolean Locris' story by the Epizephyrean Locrians who felt it appropriate to connect the fates of two famous poets who composed thematically similar poetry.[11] Epizephyrean Locris in South-Italy was in the sphere of influence of early Pythagoreans, whose impact on Hesiod's tradition is discussed already above.[12] The same tradition which linked Stesichorus with Hesiod provides the name of Stesichorus' mother Ctemene, Ctimene or Clymene.[13]

The existence of at least one brother of Stesichorus was known by the middle of the fifth century: according to Hippias of Elis, the brother of the poet was a well-known geometrist. Owing to the poor state of the manuscripts we cannot know for certain what Hippias (and Proclus, thanks to whom this account has come down to us) reckoned as the name of the brother, but it may have been Mamercus.[14] In later sources he was called Mamertius by Heron, and Mamertinus in the Suda.[15] The second brother of the poet was, according to Suda, Helianax the law-giver.[16] Both brothers can be associated with the Pythagoreans by profession: a law-giver and a well-known mathematician in Sicily/Italy around the middle

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[9] Thuc. 6.5.1: καὶ Ἱμέρα ἀπὸ Ζάγκλης ᾠκίσθη ὑπὸ Εὐκλείδου καὶ Σίμου καὶ Σάκωνος.

[10] P. 25 above. The references on Hesiod as Stesichorus' father are on p. 11 n. 16.

[11] It should be remembered that many more different poems were ascribed to Hesiod in antiquity than in present days, see above p. 37.

[12] See p. 54. The tradition of a family link between Hesiod and Stesichorus persisted at least until the Roman times as Cicero rejects this opinion that Hesiod was the younger poet's grandfather on chronological grounds (*De Rep.* 2.20).

[13] Ctemene: Arist. fr. 565 R., *Vita Hesiodi* 3,4. Clymene: Philoch. 328 F 213. More about Ctemene/Clymene see p. 11 and 25. Archiepe/Archiepes as the name of Stesichorus' mother: p. 11 n. 19.

[14] Hipp. 86 B 12 DK ap. Procl. *Eucl. Prolog.* 2: μετὰ δὲ τοῦτον (sc. Θαλῆν) [Μάμερκος] ὁ Στησιχόρου τοῦ ποιητοῦ ἀδελφὸς ὡς ἐφαψάμενος τῆς περὶ γεωμετρίαν σπουδῆς μνημονεύεται. καὶ Ἱππίας ὁ Ἠλεῖος ἱστόρησεν ὡς ἐπὶ γεωμετρίᾳ δόξαν αὐτοῦ λαβόντος. In the oldest manuscript (M) stands ἀμερι[ο] instead of Μάμερκος to which a later hand has added μ in front of it, and corrected the *spiritus lenis* in acute, and ι in κ. Friedlein, following these corrections and the reading in another manuscript (Z), emended the name into Μάμερκος. Other readings are Ἀμέριστος (B_3, G, A) / *Ameristus* (B, cf. Z) and Μαμέρτιος (μαρμέρτιος, μαρμέτιος) (H_2). See Friedlein 1873:65, Thomas 1957:147. Davies in Stesich. TA28 in PMGF, and Campbell (2001:36) in Stesich. T 15 accept the emendation; see also Wilamowitz 1913:237 n. 3.

[15] Heron *Defin.* 136.1, Suda s.v. Στησίχορος.

[16] Suda s.v. Στησίχορος. Helianax is not attested in other sources.

of the sixth century can hardly be a figure outside of the Pythagorean circle.[17] Mamercus appears elsewhere also as the name of the son of Pythagoras and Μάρμακος as the father of Pythagoras.[18]

Thus, it seems that there existed two different traditions about Stesichorus' family, as already has been pointed out by Wilamowitz.[19] First the Himerean tradition, which linked the poet to Euclides the *oikistes* of the city; and secondly the Locrian tradition, which combined the Ozolean and Epizephyrean Locrian stories about Hesiod and Stesichorus. Since Stesichorus' tradition contains some names of the early Pythagoreans (Euetes, Euphemus, Euphorbus, Mamercus) and because the Locrian tradition linked Stesichorus with Hesiod whose tradition is clearly influenced by the Pythagoreans, it is reasonable to assume that the Pythagorean features belong in the Locrian rather that Himerean tradition. Both strands of tradition and all main details about Stesichorus' family were known in the Classical period.

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[17] West 1971a:303, but see Burkert 1972:417 n. 93, who finds that the linking of Stesichorus' brother with Mamercus is built on sand.

Pythagoras was believed to have invented legislation: "He also founded another excellent kind of justice: legislation. /. . . / That is why the best legislators were students of Pythagoras, first Charondas of Catana, then Zaleucus and Timaratus who wrote laws for Locri, and Theaitetus and Helicaon and Aristocrates and Phytius, who were the legislators for Rhegium. All these were given honours equal to the gods by their fellow-citizens" (Iambl. *VP* 172, transl. by Clark). Cf. *ibid.* 130 which repeats the same names (with Timares *pro* Timaratus) and adds Theocles of Rhegium. Also Zalmoxis the Thracian is mentioned, he was Pythagoras' slave and, after he was set free, made laws for the Getae (*ibid.* 172).

[18] Plut. *Aem. Paul.* 2.1, *Numa* 8.9, Festus, p. 22 Lindsey, Diog. L. 8.1. In another place (p. 116 Lindsey) Festus says, however: "*Mamercus: praenomen Oscum est ab eo, quod hi Martem Mamertem appellant.*"

[19] In Wilamowitz' opinion, the tradition as we know it is a mixture of the biographical traditions of three different poets with the same name. First, Stesichorus of Himera, son of Euphemus, Euclides, or Euetes (emended from Hyetes), who lived at the time of Phalaris (i.e. in the first part of the sixth century). In honour of this poet the brazen statue was set up in Thermae. The second Stesichorus, according to Wilamowitz, belongs to the Locrian tradition, and with him are associated the accounts of Mataurus, Hesiod and Ctimene as the parents of the poet, his brother Mamercus, and the story of the White Island. The third poet, who is mentioned in the *Marmor* (Ep. 73) as Stesichorus the Second, was from Himera, composed dithyrambs, and lived in the fourth century BC (Wilamowitz 1900:34 n. 3 and 4, 1913:234–238, 1937:61 with n. 1). Modern commentators have generally accepted the existence of two different poets called Stesichorus, cf. Vürtheim 1919:104–105, Edmonds 1952:22 n. 3, Page in PMG:443, West 1971:304, Campbell 1993:210–212, and ascribe to the later poet, in addition to the *Cyclops*, also the *Daphnis* and *Scylla* (Schmid-Stählin 1929:479, West 1970:206). In fact, the construction of the second (or third) poet of the same name is a frequently used device to explain chronological or

3. *Stesichorus' home and travels*

In ancient sources the most frequently mentioned city for Stesichorus' home town is Himera on the northern coast of Sicily. Among other authors, Glaucus of Rhegium, Plato and Megaclides call the poet Himerean and Aristotle tells a story how Stesichorus warned the Himereans against tyranny.[20] He was linked to Himera also through his father: Euclides of Zancle, as mentioned in the previous section, was one of the three leaders of the colonisation of Himera.[21]

Another home town attested for Stesichorus is Mataurus in South Italy, which was (according to Stephanus of Byzantium) a Locrian colony.[22] The connection with Locris provides a possible reason why the poet was linked to Mataurus: as is already said above, the link between Stesichorus and the Locrian tradition about Hesiod was probably created in Epizephyrean Locris,—possibly by the Mataurians.[23] According to Solinus, however, Mataurus/Metaurus was founded by the Zancleans.[24] This information may too have its roots in Stesichorean tradition: if Euclides of Zancle was believed to have founded Stesichorus' home town, and if, on the other hand, the poet was linked to the Locrian tradition, then his home town of Zanclean origin (Himera) may have easily become mixed up with the Locrian colony Mataurus in the tradition.

There are some accounts which suggest that Stesichorus travelled in Italy and the Greek mainland. He had warned the Locrians—presumably

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ethical difficulties by ancient authors, see, for example, *Vita Hesiodi* 3 (referring to the existence of many Homeroi) or the tradition of the second Sappho (see p. 190).

[20] Glauc. Rheg. in [Plut.] *Mus*. 7.1133ef, Pl. *Phaedr*. 244a, Megacl. (4th century BC?) ap. Athen. 12.512e–513a, Arist. *Rhet*. 2.1393b. Later accounts: *Marmor* Ep. 73 (the "Second" Stesichorus), Cic. *Verr*. 2.2.86, Conon 26 F 1.42, Paus. 3.19.9, 8.3.2, 9.2.3, 9.11.2, Ael. *VH* 10.18 and ap. Suda s.v. Θέμις, Clem. Alex. *Strom*. 1.16.78, Himerius *Or*. 27.27, pp. 126f. Colonna, Suda s.v. Στησίχορος, schol. Pi. *O*. 12, IG 14.1213.

[21] Thuc. 6.5.1, *cit*. in p. 66 n. 9. Himera was founded in 649/8 BC (Diod. Sic. 13.62.4). According to Vibius Sequester (*De flum*. p. 15 Gelsomino), Stesichorus mentioned the river Himera which gave its name to the city in his poetry (270 PMG).

[22] Steph. Byz. s.v. Μάταυρος, Suda s.v. Στησίχορος. Stephanus placed the city mistakenly to Sicily, probably because he knew the other tradition that Stesichorus was a Sicilian poet. Mataurus or Metaurus might, according to Dunbabin, have been founded in the seventh century, although the earliest extant remains are of the sixth century (1948:169).

[23] Of course, Stesichorus may actually have lived both in Mataurus and Himera during his life, see Smith in DGRBM p. 908, West 1971a:304. However, the information that Mataurus was a Locrian colony rests only on this particular passage of Stephanus (n. 22), and may have arisen from the belief that the parents of Stesichorus the Mataurian, Hesiod and Ctemene, had lived in Locris.

[24] Solin. 2.11, Mela 2.68.

Epizephyrean Locri in South Italy—not to prove wantons and cause their enemies (possibly the people of Rhegium) to invade their land.[25] According to *Marmor Parium*, the poet "arrived in Greece" in 485 / 4 BC, and came, according to the Suda, after he was exiled from Arcadian Pallantium, back to Sicily where he died in Catana.[26] Good poets did usually travel a lot, performing their poetry at festivals in different cities and Stesichorus probably did the same, but the only destinations of his journeys which his biographical tradition records are Pallantium, Locri, and Catana. Some modern commentators have suggested that the account that Stesichorus visited Pallantium contains historically true information, and on the grounds of the Spartan flavour of some of the fragments of Stesichorus, Bowra has proposed that the poet visited on the Greek mainland also Sparta where he may have composed the *Palinode* and *Oresteia*, and travelled perhaps to Boeotia as well.[27] Wilamowitz, however, supposes that the account of Pallantium is derived wholly from the *Geryoneis*.[28]

In sum, it seems that, as in the case of the parents, two different traditions existed also about the home town of Stesichorus: one that placed the poet in Himera and linked him with the founder of the city; and the other, Locrian tradition which claimed Stesichorus to have been the citizen of Mataurus, Southern Italy. According to ancient sources, he travelled at least in Sicily (Catana), in Southern Italy (Locri), and to some extent also on the Greek mainland (Pallantium).

4. *Stesichorus' poetry and music*

Stesichorus' poetry was certainly well known in fifth-century Athens: Simonides refers to him side by side with Homer as a celebrated storyteller of the deeds of Meleager, and several of his lines are cited or paraphrased by Aristophanes as something well known to the audience.[29] His

[25] Arist. *Rhet*. 2.1395a.

[26] *Marmor* Ep. 50, Suda s.v. Στησίχορος. Pausanias (8.3.2) says that Stesichorus mentioned Pallantium in his *Geryoneis* (182 PMG). In another fragment (181 PMG) he was said to have sung about Pholus the Centaur whose cave was in Arcadia, but not close to Pallantium—see Ruzokoki 2009:11–12.

[27] Bowra 1961:111–119. West agrees in the case of Sparta (1969:147 f., 1971:305), and so does Podlecki 1984:158–160 and Wright 2005:109. Hutchinson hesitates (2001:114 with n. 1).

[28] Wilamowitz 1913:236 f., see p. 69 n. 26 above.

[29] Sim. 564 PMG, Aristoph. *Pax* 756, 797, 800, *Nub*. 967, and scholia *ad loc*. (pp. 122,

poems are mentioned and/or cited by Isocrates, Aristoxenus, Plato, Dio Chrysostom, and others. In later antiquity an edition in twenty-six poems was available, and altogether seventeen titles of mythological and other songs of his have come down to us.[30] According to Simonides, Stesichorus composed the *Funeral Games of Pelias* about the deeds of the Argonauts.[31] At least three of his poems, the *Geryoneis*, *Cerberus*, *Cycnus*, and possibly also the *Scylla* were about the adventures of Heracles.[32] The *Boar-hunters* was probably about Meleager and the hunt of the Calydonian Boar, and the *Europeia* and *Eriphyle* about the Theban legends.[33] In his *Peace*, Aristophanes cites or refers to three lines of Stesichorus' *Oresteia*, which was a work at least in two parts, or possibly two different songs with the same title.[34] Stesichorus composed also at least two poems about the Trojan War: the *Sack of Troy*, and the *Returns*.[35] Besides

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125, 186 Holwerda). Line 967 from the *Clouds* was ascribed to Stesichorus by Chamaeleon "and others" (possibly Eratosthenes, see van Leeuwen's correction in schol. RV Aristoph. *Nub*. 967, I. 3.1.186 Holwerda), and to the early-fifth-century lyric poet Lamprocles of Athens by Phrynichus (POxy 1611.5 + 43, 274 PMGF).

[30] Suda s.v. Στησίχορος, probably meaning poems by the "books."

[31] Ἆθλα ἐπὶ Πελίᾳ: 178–180 PMG, Sim. 564 PMG. Also: Zenob. 6.44 and EM 544.54. Athenaeus (4.172de) hesitates whether the author of the Ἆθλα is Stesichorus or Ibycus.

[32] Γηρυονηίς (181–186 PMG, 7–87 SLG): Str. 3.2.11 (148), Paus. 8.3.2, Athen. 11.469e and 11.781d, schol. Ap. Rhod. 1.211 (182 PMG), schol. Hes. *Th*. 287 (186 PMG), see also the fragment in Athen. 11.469e which is located in *Geryoneis* by Page (185 PMG, 17 SLG), followed by Campbell 2001:78 f. Κέρβερος: Pollux 10.152 (206 PMG). Κύκνος: schol. Pi. A *Ol*. 10.19, I 315 Dr. (207 PMG). Σκύλλη: schol. Ap. Rhod. 4.825–831g (220 PMG). Cf. also Fr. Bob (6.623 Keil) "… *Stesichorus in Sicilia*," emended "*Stesichorus in Scilla*" by West (1970:206).

[33] Συοθῆραι (221–222 PMG), ascribed to Stesichorus by Athenaeus 3.95d who cites a line from the poem. We have also a corrupt papyrus which seems to include a fragment of this poem (POxy 2359 fr. 1 = 222 PMG). Ἐυρώπεια: schol. Eur. *Phoen*. 670, 1.318 Schw. (195 PMG). Ἐριφύλη (194 PMG): Philod. *De piet*. p. 52 Gomperz, Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.10.3, Sext. Emp. *Adv. math*. 1.261, see also POxy 2618 fr. 1 and 3 (148 and 150 SLG). Some modern commentators have tentatively ascribed to Stesichorus also another fragment (PLille 76 + 73) on Theban themes, and suggested that it may belong in the *Thebaid* or *Seven Against Thebes* (neither title is attested in ancient sources): see Parsons 1977:7 ff., Campbell 2001:136 ff.

[34] Ὀρέστεια ά, β': schol. Aristoph. *Pax* 775 (210 PMG), 800 (211 PMG), 797 (212 PMG), Philod. *De piet*., p. 24 Gomperez (215 PMG), Athen. 12.512e, schol. Vat. in Dion. Thrac. *Art*. 6 (213 PMG), schol. *Il*. 7.76 (ii 224 Erbse), Habron ap. POxy 1087 ii 47, viii 105 G.-H. (214 PMG), cf. also POxy 29 *comm. in melicos* fr. 26 col. ii (217 PMG), and schol. Aeschyl. *Cho*. 733 (218 PMG).

[35] Ἰλίου Πέρσις (196–205 PMG, 88–132 SLG): Harpocr. s.v. καθελών (196 PMG), Paus. 10.26.1 (197 PMG), 10.27.2 (198 PMG), *Tabula Iliaca* (IG 14.1284) fr. 205., POxy 2803 fr. 1 (133 SLG), Dio Chrys. *Or*. 2.33 (203 PMG), Eustath. in *Od*. 1698.2, cf. also Athen. 13.610c, 10.456 f. Νόστοι: Paus. 10.26.1 (208 PMG), POxy 2359 fr. 1 (209 PMG). The fragments 133–147 SLG are titled as the *Wooden Horse*,—a title not mentioned in

these long mythological poems, which were possibly performed by a choir, Stesichorus composed shorter poems such as the (*Epithalamium to*) *Helen*, two *Palinodes*, love-songs (*Calyce*, *Rhadine*), and was said to have written a bucolic poem about Daphnis, hymns, fables, and possibly also paeans.[36]

Only very little is known about Stesichorus' music. The poet himself refers to his *Oresteia* as a Phrygian song, i.e. composed in the *Phrygian* mode.[37] The emotional *Phrygian* mode was extensively used, probably by both the aulodes and citharodes.[38] According to Glaucus, Stesichorus used the *Chariot* nome and the dactylic rhythm derived from the *Orthian* nome, being thus the follower of Olympus (the aulode) rather than of Orpheus, Terpander, Archilochus or Thaletas (the citharodes).[39] The *Chariot* nome was associated with auletic music and was believed to have been invented either by Olympus or the Mysian pipers.[40] The *Orthian* nome, on the other hand, was ascribed to Terpander, and possibly used in both citharodic and aulodic music.[41] Therefore, as far as we can judge on the basis of this scarce evidence, the ancient authors seem to have believed that Stesichorus composed both aulodic and citharodic music.

The ancient sources refer to Stesichorus as λυρικός, μελοποιός, μελῳδός and κιθαρῳδός.[42] The hints of his possible activity as a choral poet are found only in the Suda which says that the poet came to be called

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extant ancient sources as a work of Stesichorus. It may have been a variant title for the *Iliu Persis*, see West 1971b:262–264.

[36] Ἐπιθαλάμιον Ἑλένας (187–191 PMG): Athen. 3.81d, 10.451d, schol. A Hom. *Il.* 2.339, *Argum. Theocr.* 18, Paus. 2.22.6 f., cf. also Isocr. *Hel.* 64, and Pl. *Phaedr.* 243a. Παλινῳδίαι (192–193 PMG): see the references in the note for 192 PMG. Καλύκη (277 PMG): Aristox. fr 89 Wehrli ap. Athen. 14.619de. Ῥαδίνη (101 PMG) is ascribed to Stesichorus with some doubt in Strabo 8.3.20. Rose (1932) regards *Rhadine* as a folk song, Bowra (1961:84–88) suggests that Stesichorus composed these poems based on Sicilian lore for some local cult or celebration. Cf. Lehnus 1975. Δάφνις: Ael. *VH* 10.18. Hymns: Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 1.78.5; fables: Arist. *Rhet.* 2.1393, Conon 26 F 1.42, cf. also Crates ap. Ael. *NA* 17.37; paeans: Timae. 566 F 32.

[37] Stes. ap. Aristoph. *Pax* 797 ff. (212 PMG).

[38] Later the dithyramb was usually composed in the *Phrygian* mode, see Arist. *Pol.* 1342a32–b12. See also West 1992:180 f., 331 ff., Barker 1989:14 ff., and OED 3rd ed. s.v. *Music*.

[39] Glaucus in [Plut.] *Mus.* 7.1133 f.

[40] [Plut.] *Mus.* 7.1133 f.

[41] *Orthios* as citharodic nome: Poll. 4.65, [Plut.] *Mus.* 24.1140f, Suda s.v. Ὄρθιος νόμος. [Plut.] *Mus.* 7.1133f. may be understood also in the way that the *Orthios* nome was believed to be an auletic nome, see Barker 1984:252.

[42] Λυρικός in *Vita Hesiodi* 11 (by Tzetzes) p. 12 Gaisf., Suda s.v. Στησίχορος; μελο-

Stesichorus because he was the first to establish a chorus of singers to the cithara.[43] The Suda also claims that all the poetry of Stesichorus was triadic, containing strophe, antistrophe and epode, a feature which is often regarded as characteristic of choral songs.[44] The triadic nature of Stesichorus' poetry must have been widely and well known, since it gave arise to an expression (τρία Στησιχόρου) which was used for scolding people who were devoid of culture and education: it was said that they did not know even the "three of Stesichorus."[45] Therefore, it seems that ancient authors regarded Stesichorus as a lyric poet who composed songs in different genres both for aulos and cithara, for soloists, and also for a choir.

In modern handbooks Stesichorus was used to be described exclusively as a choral poet. This opinion was based on the Suda's view about how the poet received his professional name and on the triadic nature of extant fragments of Stesichorus' poetry. Only recently the validity of this opinion has begun to be doubted, and it has been proposed instead that Stesichorus was a citharode and the triadic structure of his poetry is a purely traditional musical convention of composition.[46] At present views vary considerably on that matter. There are still those who argue strongly in favour of the view that Stesichorus composed mainly choral poetry,[47] and those who believe that Stesichorus may well have composed both monodic (citharodic, aulodic) and choral songs as well as poems and music in other genres (hymns, love songs, paeans, etc.) for different occasions.[48] The tradition, unfortunately provides no decisive help in the question whether Stesichorus was a choral or monodic poet or both. However, the fact that comparatively few details in tradition are drawn from his verses, may suggest that at least most of it was sung by the chorus and its leader, and the audience did not associate the "I" in the songs with the author as easily as, for example, in the case of Sapphic or Arcilochean poetry.

ποιός in *Vita Hesiodi* 3, schol. Pind. *Ol.* 12; μελῳδός in Tz. schol. Σ Hes. *Op*. 269 (p. 159 Gaisf.); κιθαρῳδός in Suda s.v. ἐπιτήδευμα.

[43] Suda s.v. Στησίχορος.

[44] Suda s.v. τρία Στησιχόρου.

[45] Suda *ibid*. About the Suda's entry and the proverb, see Davies 1982:206–210.

[46] West 1971a:313, Gerber 1997:233 f.

[47] Burkert 1987:51–53, Dihle 1994:45.

[48] Podlecki 1984:156, Davies 1988 *passim*, Kurke 2000:80, *et al.*

5. *Blindness,* Helen*, and the* Palinode

Only four lines of Stesichorus' *Helen* have come down to us (187, 188 PMG). Neither of the fragments is very revealing about the story of Helen: fr. 187 is about Cydonean apples, myrtle leaves, roses and violets, fr. 188 mentions a footbath of *litharge* (lead monoxide).[49] From the works of other authors, however, we know approximately what the poem was about: Stesichorus told about the abduction of Helen by Theseus and her rescue by the Dioscuri.[50] While talking about Helen, he used a slanderous tone and possibly called the daughters of Tyndareus "twice-wed and thrice-wed and husband-deserters" (223 PMG).[51] According to tradition, Stesichorus was struck blind for his blasphemy and regained his sight only after he had composed one or more recantations or *Palinodes*. In the *Palinode*(*s*) he was believed to have blamed Homer and Hesiod for telling lies about Helen, and to say that she never sailed to Troy with Alexander after all, and it was only a phantom of Helen over whom the Achaeans and the Trojans were fighting at Troy.[52]

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[49] In addition to them five more lines are extant, if 223 PMG (about the restless character of the daughers of Tyndareus) belongs in *Helen* as Bergk has suggested.

[50] Helen, pregnant by Theseus, gave birth in Argos and, as she was not married, gave her baby daughter Iphigeneia to her sister Clytemnestra the wife of Agamemnon. When Helen was back at home in Sparta, the best men of Greece came to woo her because of her lineage and beauty, and the Trojan War followed. See Paus. 2.22.6 (191 PMG), and schol. A Hom. *Il*. 2.339 (190 PMG).

[51] References to *Helen* and *Palinode*: Isocr. *Hel*. 64, Pl. *Phaedr*. 243a, cf. *Resp*. 9.586c, Dio Chrys. *Or*. 11.40 ff., Philostr. *Vita Apoll*. 6.11, Max. Tyre 21.2, Suda s.v. Στησίχορος, etc., see also Wright 2005:86 ff. Fr. 223 PMG is located in the *Helen* by Bergk (Edmonds follows him; but cf. West 1969:144 n. 7), in *Oresteia* by Geel, and in the *Iliou persis* by Blomfield and Welcker (see Page in PMG p. 120 *ad loc*.). In this fragment Stesichorus blames Aphrodite for making Tyndareus' daughters unfaithful because he had forgotten to sacrifice to her. Helen's partners were Theseus, Menelaus, Paris, Deiphobus, and on the White Island Achilles. Clytemnestra's husbands were Agamemnon and Aegisthus.

[52] Plato quotes three lines of the *Palinode* (*Phaedr*. 243a = 192 PMG, see also *Resp*. 9.586c = 193 PMG) and Chamaeleon quotes the first lines of the two *Palinodes* (POxy 2506 fr. 26 col. I = 193 PMG). Wright (2005:86–109) doubts in the authenticity of the lines quoted by Plato and suggests (p. 106 f.) that they are Plato's own invention for the sake of his argument that the written word is nothing but a phantom of the real truth (see *Phaedr*. 276). Wright accepts, however, that Isocrates' reference to the *Palinode* (*Hel. 64*) is independent of Plato and may be based on Stesichorus' poem called *Palinode* (or some source which contained information about the poem).

According to Dio Chrysostom (*Or*. 11.40), Stesichorus had said that Helen did not leave Sparta at all, while some other authors believed that although she was carried off by Alexander, she stopped in Egypt and remained there to the end of the war: Hdt. 2.112–120, Eur. *Hel*., cf. *Od*. 4.349–570, see also Ael. Arist. *Or*. 1.128 with schol. *ad loc*. Lucian

The story of Stesichorus' blindness is obviously based on his *Helen* and *Palinode*. Whether Stesichorus only composed the poems or told the whole story, i.e. that he became blind for slandering the goddess in *Helen* and had to compose the *Palinode* to regain his sight (as is told by Isocrates), is not certain. One detail, namely the way the poet became aware of the cause of his blindness, varies considerably in tradition. According to Isocrates he simply realized the cause of his plight, in Plato's version he had some help from the Muses, in [Acro's] scholium it is Apollo who advises him to compose the recantation, while the Suda says that the poet composed the *Palinode* as the result of a dream.[53] In Conon's and Pausanias' version a Crotonian man Autoleon or Leonymus who had visited the White Island and met Helen there brings a message to Stesichorus saying that the loss of his sight is caused by the wrath of Helen and to be healed he needs to compose a recantation.[54] According to Horace's account, which may be influenced by another Italian legend, the story of Phormio, those who deprived Stesichorus of his sight and later restored it were the Dioscuri, the regular helpers of Helen.[55] As both Autoleon and Phormio were wounded in the battle of Sagras fought between Locri and Croton, these accounts probably belong to the Locrian tradition.[56] The variability of this detail indicates that there was no early authoritative source for it, i.e. Stesichorus probably did not say anything particular about how he became aware of the cause of his blindness.

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reports that Helen and Stesichorus both eventually lived in peace in the Island of the Blessed (*VH* 2.15).

[53] Isocr. and Pl. in p. 73 n. 51, [Acro] on Hor. *Odes* 1.16.1, Suda s.v. Στησίχορος.

[54] Conon 26 F 1.18, Paus. 3.19.9–20.1. Autoleon/Leonymus had been in the battle between Croton and Locri in Italy where he was wounded by the ghost of Ajax son of Oileus. As the wound did not heal he went to Delphi for advice. The Pythia told him to travel to the White Island where Ajax would cure him. In the White Island he was healed and met besides Ajax several other heroes, and also Helen who was wedded to Achilleus. About Conon's version see Brown 2002:142 f.–147.

[55] Hor. *Epod*. 17.42 and schol. Cruq. *ad loc*. Phormio of Croton was wounded in the battle on the River Sagras by one of the Dioscuri. Phormio's wound could not be healed till he consulted the Pythia, who told him to go to Sparta, where his healer would be the first person who invited him to dinner. When he arrived at Sparta, a young man invited him in, and after dinner applied scrapings from his spear to Phormio's wound. When Phormio was about to mount his chariot he suddenly found himself holding the knob of his own house door in Croton. The young host was none other than one of the Dioscuri who had helped the Locrians with whom the Crotonians had had a battle. See Theop. 115 F 392 ap. Suda s.v. Φορμίων, Justin. 20.2–3, Cratin. fr. 238 K.-A., and also Paus. 3.16.2–3, Plut. *Mor*. 1103a. Clement of Alexandria links Phormio (of Lacedaemon) with Pythagoras and other magi (*Strom*. 1.133.2). See also the story of Telephus (*Arg. Cypria* 7).

[56] See the notes 54 and 55 above.

Perhaps he mentioned his blindness only metaphorically, or maybe did not mention it at all. Graziosi has suggested that Stesichorus might have told the story of his blindness in order to emphasize his greater religious understanding than Homer's: unlike Homer he realised the truth, the reason of his blindness, and found a way to retrieve the situation.[57] The story, based probably at least to some extent on poetry may have also entered Stesichorus' tradition simply as one of the conventional topics of early biographical traditions,—e.g. as a theme of a temporary calamity suffered by the person concerned and his subsequent healing. In any case, the story was known in the Classical period.

There is also a proverb which may be linked to the tradition of Stesichorus' recantation of the story of Helen: according to the Suda, when someone was telling the opposite to what he had said, it was said that he is "singing a palinode."[58]

6. *Stesichorus and politics*

There are three stories in Stesichorus' tradition about the poet's intervention in politics. First, Aristotle's account that the poet warned the Himereans against the tyranny of Phalaris: when the Himereans had elected Phalaris as general with unlimited power and were offering him a bodyguard, Stesichorus made a speech and told them a fable of a horse who, annoyed by the damage a stag had done to his pasturage, asked a hunter to help him and punish the stag. The hunter agreed on the condition that the horse allowed him to bridle and mount him, and after the stag was killed the horse found himself trapped in the servitude to the man. Stesichorus finished his speech with an admonition not to try to take revenge on the enemies of Himera with the help of the general, lest the Himereans themselves would become his slaves.[59] In the version told by Conon the would-be tyrant is Gelon.[60] Gelon became the tyrant

[57] Graziosi 2002:147–150. Cf. also Lefkowitz 1981:32 f. Bowra (1961:108), in turn, feels that the story of blindness "smacks too much of folk-lore to suggest that he told it himself," but Stesichorus might have called himself τυφλός in a figurative sense speaking of his former attitude to Helen in his *Palinode*. The connected story of Leonymus has been regarded as a doublet of the story of Phormio and the Dioscuri, which was attached to the tradition of Stesichorus in order to shed light on the way the poet became aware of the cause of his misfortune. See Wilamowitz 1900:13, West 1971a:303 f., Burkert 1972:152 f.

[58] Suda s.v. παλινοδία. The Suda does not strictly link the saying to Stesichorus.

[59] Arist. *Rhet*. 2.1393b.

[60] Conon 26 F 1.42.

of Gela around 491 BC, which, if we accept the usual date for Stesichorus in the first part of the sixth century, is too late for being Stesichorus' contemporary.[61] Thus, Gelon has probably replaced Phalaris in the older story. Phalaris, on the other hand, is placed in the latter part of the seventh and first part of the sixth centuries by ancient authors, and is thus more appropriate in the story told by Stesichorus.[62] Phalaris, however, is primarily associated with Acragas on the southern coast of Sicily. It has been suggested that the whole story may be a conventional motif of the genre of early biography used by Stesichorus when he was creating his own version of the "story of warning" and performing it to the Himerean audience.[63] Doing so he must have, however, at least hinted at the would-be tyrant by name, since it is very difficult to imagine that he told an "anonymous" fable the target of which even his contemporary audience did not grasp. The poet could have told about some other local overambitious and power-greedy man whose name was later (but well before Aristotle who refers to the story as a familiar apophthegm) replaced by the name of the notorious tyrant. It is possible that Phalaris was inserted in the story by the Pythagoreans, for, according to tradition, Pythagoras himself had conflicts with him and was even arrested for his views by the tyrant.[64] It is equally possible, however, that under a common Phoenician danger which threatened all the western cities, the Himereans decided to ally themselves to Phalaris, and Stesichorus indeed warned the citizens against the danger of tyranny.[65]

In the section about the use of maxims in his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle mentions another case when Stesichorus intervened in politics: the poet had warned the Locrians not to become insolent "lest the cicadas should chirp from the ground." Aristotle does not explain the meaning of this obscure

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[61] However, it fits with the date (485 BC) that the *Marmor Parium* gives for the poet. About the date of Stesichorus see p. 79.

[62] Eusebius' date for Phalaris is Ol.31 (656/3), the Suda places him in Ol.52 (572/69). According to OCD 3rd ed. s.v. *Phalaris*, the tyrant was in power *c.* 570-*c.* 549.

[63] See Lefkowitz 1981:34 who suggest that the stories against tyrants are typical traditional anecdotes told by archaic poets without naming their enemies, and introduced later, probably after the fifth century, into Stesichorus' tradition, since the audience preferred to think of the poets as civic heroes. On the other hand, the association of Stesichorus with Phalaris has in modern times been one of the reasons why the poet has been dated to the sixth century, see Wilamowitz 1900:34, 1913:236, RE s.v. *Stesichoros*, Bowra in OCD 2nd ed. s.v. *Stesichorus*.

[64] Iambl. *VP* 215–217, 221.

[65] About the Phoenician threat to Acragas and Himera see Dunbabin 1948:318 f.

phrase, obviously expecting his readers to know it well.[66] The saying is explained by Demetrius (who ascribes it to Dionysius the fourth-century tyrant of Sicily) as "lest their enemies would invade the country and cut down all the trees" (so that the cicadas would have to live on the ground).[67] Thus, the accounts about Stesichorus as a political adviser are attested in both Sicilian/Himerean and Italian/Locrian traditions.

The third example of Stesichorus' peacemaking activities is the account of how the poet restored peace between two groups of adversaries who had been drawn up to do battle with each other, by taking up his position between them and singing to them.[68]

These stories place Stesichorus, whose extant poetry treats only mythical non-political topics, among the poets who used their talent to influence the political situation in their own or neighbouring cities, and, in a wider context, in the network of traditional themes according to which a poet functions as a healer or the re-establisher of a normal situation.[69]

7. *Stesichorus' name and his death*

According to the Suda, Stesichorus' name was originally Tisias, "Avenger," and he got his better known nick-name later owing to his activity as a choral poet.[70] The meaning of the name points to the possibility that Stesichorus was, in tradition, predestined to take revenge for the murder of his kinsman. There is, however, no extant story of Stesichorus' revenge.[71]

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[66] Arist. *Rhet*. 2.1395.

[67] Demetr. *Eloc*. 413c.

[68] Diog. Bab. ap. Philodem. *Mus*. 1.30 (281c PMG). Diogenes does not specify the location or the people involved in the story. Cf. the comparative story about Terpander ap. Suda s.v. μετὰ Λέσβιον ᾠδόν in which Terpander restores peace in Sparta, see p. 139.

[69] See, for example, the poetry and traditions of Callinus, Tyrtaeus, Solon, Alcman, Terpander, Thaletas, etc., and p. 214 below.

[70] Suda s.v. Στησίχορος.

[71] However, some details in the story of Hesiod's death and in the tradition of Stesichorus have similarities with the story about Alcmaeon (Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.7.5–6). The father of both Hesiod's and Alcmaeon's murderers was called Phegeus; the murderers were the brothers of a woman connected to Hesiod and Alcmaeon respectively, and the murders were retaliation for the wrong (supposedly) done by Hesiod and Alcmaeon (a rape or seduction in Hesiod's case, swindling by Alcmaeon). Both stories are also located in the same region: Alcmaeon was active in Psophis, around the river Acheloos, and his avengers were pursued to Tegea which lies very close to Pallantium from where Stesichorus was expelled. Could it be that there existed a story, according to which

After he had been expelled from Pallantium, Stesichorus travelled to Catana in Sicily and was murdered there or on his way to the city. His murderer was a robber called Hicanus ("Competent") who was blamed also for killing a piper called Aeschylus.[72] Stesichorus was buried in Catana near the gate which was later called Stesichorean Gate.[73] The tomb was an impressive octagonal monument with a column in each corner, and eight steps on each side. The shape of the tomb gave rise to the expression "eight all" (πάντα ὀκτώ), which, in turn, became current among dice-players who started to call the throw which turned out eight "Stesichorus."[74]

Only one account says that the poet was buried in his home town Himera.[75] There was, however, a statue of Stesichorus, a bent old man holding a book, in the city. When Himera was destroyed in 409 BC, the survivors took the statue with other treasures to Thermae and set it up in their new home town.[76] That the poet lived a long life is mentioned by Cicero according to whom Stesichorus continued to compose even in his old age, and by Lucian, who says that the poet was eighty-five years old when he died.[77]

Stesichorus/Tisias the son of Hesiod was predestined to take revenge for the murder of his father and killed Phegeus and his sons in Pallantium from where he was banished for that reason? One of the works of Stesichorus is titled *Eriphyle* (194 PMG; S 148, S 149, S 150 SLG, fr. 194I–V PMGF. In S 148 SLG Alcmaeon is mentioned). Although most of the references to this poem deal with the problem of which of the heroes killed at Thebes were raised from the dead by Asclepius, the poem probably told also about the betrayal of Eriphyle in length. Stesichorus may well have referred to the death of Alcmaeon in his poem, and may thus have given rise to the development of the account with similar story-pattern about the poet's own life. The hypothesis remains tenuous, however, and is not supported by the discrepancies found in the traditions of Hesiod/Stesichorus and of Alcmaeon: the avengers of Alcmaeon, for example, survived whereas Tisias was killed; and among several accounts about the death of the murderers of Hesiod (see p. 27) there is no extant version which would suggest the link between the son of Hesiod and the death of the murderers. Pallantium may also have entered Stesichorus' tradition from the *Geryoneis* in which the city, according to Pausanias (8.3.2), is mentioned.

[72] Suda s.vv. Στησίχορος and ἐπιτήδευμα.

[73] Antipater in *Anth. Pal.* 7.75, Photius *Lex.* s.v. πάντα ὀκτώ, Suda s.v. Στησίχορος.

[74] Pollux 9.100, Photius and the Suda (*loc. cit* in n. 73).

[75] Pollux 9.100.

[76] Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.86. The statue is not extant. It is quite plausible that there was also a cenotaph of Stesichorus in Himera. The only other statue of Stesichorus recorded in ancient sources, is the (not extant) statue in the Baths of Zeuxippus at Constantinople, mentioned by Christodorus (*Ecphr.* in *Anth. Pal.* 2.125 ff.). About the images of Stesichorus, see Richter 1965:68.

[77] Cic. *De senect.* 7.23, [Lucian.] *Macr.* 26. The eighty-five years for Stesichorus come

The tradition of Catana as the place where Stesichorus died is clearly supported (and may even be inspired) by the existence of a spectacular tomb in the city. It certainly helped to fix the tradition.[78]

8. *The date of Stesichorus*

Most ancient sources place Stesichorus in the period between 650 and 550 BC. Eusebius' dates for the poet's *akme* and death are Ol.42.2 (611/10) and Ol.55.1 (560/59) respectively;[79] according to Cyril, Stesichorus *floruit* after Ol.42 (612/09) which is his date for Alcmaeon (Alcaeus?) and Pittacus. The different entries in the Suda say that Stesichorus lived from Ol.37 (632/28) to Ol.56 (556/2), later than Alcman and earlier than Simonides, and was contemporary with Sappho, Alcaeus, and Pittacus whom the Suda placed in Ol.42 (612/09).[80]

All these sources probably follow, directly or indirectly, Apollodorus who placed Stesichorus in relation to two other lyric poets, Alcman and Simonides, creating or using a chronological sequence according to which Alcman died in the year of Stesichorus' birth, and Stesichorus died in the same year when Simonides was born.[81] He may have derived the synchronism, for example, from Simonides fr. 564 PMG, in which Stesichorus is mentioned as a famous poet of the past; or from some tradition concerning the poets. The Apollodoran absolute date for Stesichorus, which is not extant in direct sources, may have been taken from an epigram which says that Simonides was eighty years old at the time of the archonship of Adeimantus (Adimandus) (477 BC).[82] Simonides' date of birth (and Stesichorus' date of death) would, therefore, be in Ol.56 (556/53), as it stands in the Suda, and in Cicero.[83] The Apollodoran date for Alcman's death (and, therefore, the date for Stesichorus' birth) was

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probably from a chronological speculation which linked Stesichorus with Alcman (who too is reported to have lived for 85 years) and Simonides, see p. 79.

[78] After all, Stesichorus may have indeed died and been buried in Catana.

[79] The Armenian version gives Ol.41.3 (608/7) and Ol.55.3 (558/7).

[80] Suda s.vv. Στησίχορος, Σιμωνίδης, Σαπφώ and Πιττακός.

[81] Jacoby 1902:196–200, Mosshammer 1979:218–225.

[82] Sim. fr. 77 Diehl (176 Edmonds, xxviii FGE). Modern commentators do not agree over the authorship of this epigram: Diehl and Edmonds (*ad loc.*) believe it to be Simonides' own work, Page (1981:241 ff.) finds it quite likely to be Hellenistic (in which case the early chronographers could not have used it for calculating Simonides' date).

[83] Cic. *Rep.* 2.10–20; Suda s.v. Στησίχορος in which Stesichorus is "later than the lyric poet Alcman" and died in Ol.56. Cf. also the Suda s.v. Σιμωνίδης, in which the

probably Ol.37 (632/29), as it is attested also in the Suda.[84] This date fits with another synchronism given in the Suda: Sappho, Alcaeus, Pittacus and Stesichorus lived in Ol.42.2 (611).[85] If Stesichorus was born in 632/631, he was twenty years old in 611 and therefore a contemporary to the Lesbians.[86] Eusebius preserved the Apollodoran synchronism between Stesichorus and Simonides, but placed it slightly earlier, in Ol.55.1 (560/59) and understood the γέγονε for Simonides as his *akme*.[87] He preserved also the synchronism Alcman-Stesichorus but placed it in Ol.42.2 (611/10), probably under the influence of the synchronism of Sappho-Alcaeus-Pittacus-Stesichorus-Ol.42. Eusebius (or his source) also made the synchronism of Alcman and Stesichorus literal, saying that both poets flourished in the same year, Ol.42.2 (611/10). We do not have Eusebius' date for Stesichorus' birth.[88]

Aristotle gives no absolute date for Stesichorus. However, he synchronizes him with Phalaris, which leads us to the same period.[89] In the

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Apollodoran γέγονε is understood as his *akme*—see Mosshammer 1979:221 and Jacoby 1904a:176.

[84] Suda s.v. Στησίχορος. Apollodorus may have calculated the date of Alcman on the basis of tradition that Alcman came from Sardis (16 PMG, Crates in Suda s.v. Ἀλκμάν, *Anth. Pal.* 7.709, 7.19, 7.18, Vell. Pat. 1.18.3, etc.) and that his songs were sung at the festival of Gymnopaedia which was established as an appeasement to the gods after the Spartan defeat at Hysiae, see Mosshammer 1979:224, Wade-Gery 1949:79–81. According to Herodotus (1.15), Sardis was captured by the Cimmerians at the time of the reign of Ardys. Mosshammer suggests that Apollodorus may have presumed that Alcman fled from Sardis when the city was overwhelmed by Cimmerian hordes, and arrived in Sparta in the same year as the battle of Hysiae, which Pausanias dates to Ol.27.4 (669/8), and composed hymnody which was performed next year at the first Gymnopaedia (Mosshammer 1979:219–225, Paus. 2.24.7). Thus, Alcman's *akme* would be Ol.28.1 (668/7) and his date of death Ol. 37 (632/29).

[85] Suda s.v. Σαπφώ.

[86] Ol.42.2 (611) was originally the *akme* of Pittacus (Suda s.v. Πιττακός). See Mosshammer 1979:221 and 256–254. More about the date of Sappho and Pittacus, see p. 197 below.

[87] See Mosshammer 1979:221.

[88] If we accept that Stesichorus lived 75 or 76 years, as it follows from the Apollodoran dates, Eusebius' date for Stesichorus' birth would be 635 (Ol.36) (cf. the Suda's date for Alcman's death in Ol.37). If we follow Lucian's information (*Macr.* 26) that Stesichorus lived 85 years, he would have been born in 645. If we assume that in Ol.42.2 (611) he was 20 years old (as it can be interpreted from the combined synchronisms of Apollodorus and the Suda), his date of birth would be in 631 (cf. again 632 (Ol.37) for Alcman's death in the Suda) and he would have died at the age of 71.

[89] Arist. *Rhet.* 2.1393b. The Eusebian dates for Phalaris are: Ol.32.1 (652) or Ol.32.3 (650) in the Armenian version: "*Phalaris apud Acragantinos tyrannidem exercet*"; Ol.38.4 (624) or Ol.39.2 (622) in the Armenian version: "*Phalaris tyrannis destructa*"; and Ol.52.2 (573/2) (the same in the Armenian version): "*Phalaris tyrannidem exercuit annis XVI.*"

Vita Hesiodi Pythagoras is added to this synchronism.[90] It is not possible to determine which synchronism, Stesichorus-Phalaris, Pythagoras-Phalaris, or Stesichorus-Pythagoras, came first and influenced the development of the other synchronisms: there are stories which link both Stesichorus and Pythagoras separately with the tyrant, and there are also plenty of details in tradition which connect the poet with the Pythagoreans.[91] From the point of view of historicity, all three synchronisms may actually be of the same value, since they all may have emerged from tradition.

Marmor Parium, in turn, gives a much later date for Stesichorus, saying that the poet arrived in Greece in 486/5 or 485/4 (222 years before 264/3 which is the starting year of the *Marmor*), at the time of the archonship of Philocrates when Euripides was born and Aeschylus won his first victory with a tragedy.[92] Stesichorus' arrival in Greece in 486/5 would agree with Conon's report that the tyrant against whom the poet warned the Himereans was Gelon who ruled *ca.* 491–478.[93] Stesichorus could have been believed to have come to Athens in 486/5. Again, it is not possible to settle once and for all whether the author of the *Marmor* (or his source) placed Stesichorus in the first part of the fifth century because (1) the poet was in some version of tradition primarily linked with Gelon; (2) because Gelon had in some early source already replaced Phalaris (against whom the poet warned the people); or (3) the connection with the Syracusan tyrant was developed because the poet was placed in 480s, which ruled out the synchronism Stesichorus-Phalaris. The Suda's account that the robber Hicanus murdered besides Stesichorus also the piper Aeschylus, may thanks to some further misinterpretation be derived from the same synchronism of Stesichorus and Aeschylus the tragedian (and Euripides) mentioned by the *Marmor*.[94]

In sum, Stesichorus' ancient dates rest upon two sets of synchronisms: first the synchronism Stesichorus-Alcman-Simonides which is

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[90] *Vita Hesiodi* 3: ὁ δὲ Στησίχορος οὗτος σύγχρονος ἦν Πυθαγόρᾳ τῷ φιλοσόφῳ καὶ τῷ Ἀκραγαντίνῳ Φαλάριδι. The Eusebian dates for Pythagoras are Ol.62.4 (529) or Ol.62.1 (532, the Armenian version): "*Pythagoras physicus philosophus clarus habetur*," and Ol.70.2 (499, in both versions): "*Pythagoras philosophus moritur*."

[91] Arist. *Rhet.* 2.1393b, Iambl. *VP* 215–221. For the Pythagorean connections see p. 82.

[92] *Marmor* Ep. 50. Philocrates is not attested in other sources.

[93] Conon 26 F 1.42. The date of Gelon: Paus. 6.9.4–5, Dion. 7.1, cf. Dunbabin 1948:410ff.

[94] *Marmor* Ep. 73 mentions Stesichorus the Second who had won the victory in Athens in 370/69 or 396/8.

a chronological calculation linking the famous poets, possibly on the basis of some poem or story which featured them. The synchronism was associated with another synchronism Stesichorus-Sappho-Alcaeus-Pittacus which was dated in Ol.42. The second set, Stesichorus-Phalaris(-Pythagoras), is linked with the story of the poet's warning against tyranny. In this synchronism, Gelon has replaced Phalaris in one strand of tradition.[95]

9. *The connections with the Pythagorean tradition*

It is clear from the previous sections that several details in Stesichorus' tradition connect him with the Pythagoreans.[96] First he is linked with the Pythagoreans through his family: his possible fathers Euphemus, Euphorbus and Euetes (if the emendation is correct) have Pythagorean background, the story of Hesiod's death and Stesichorus' birth was probably at least transmitted by the Pythagoreans; the poet's brothers Mamercus and Helianax were probably connected or believed to be connected with the Pythagorean circle. Secondly, Autoleon or Leonymus, who was "the first to travel to the White Island," came from Croton, the stronghold of the Pythagoreans in the latter part of the sixth century. He was also believed to have been wounded in the battle of the River Sagras. The story of this battle serves as an unhappy prelude to the triumph of the Pythagoreans of Croton in tradition, and it is only to be expected that the Pythagoreans were interested in everything concerned with this battle.[97] From the White Island, which was possibly identified originally

[95] Modern commentators usually accept the first part of the sixth century AS an approximate date for Stesichorus: see the references in p. 64 n. 2.

[96] About Stesichorus' connections with the Pythagorean tradition see also West 1971a:302–304. West maintains that the historical Stesichorus was not associated with (historical) Pythagoras himself. Indeed, the only direct link in tradition between Stesichorus and Pythagoras is the chronological synchronism in the *Vita Hesiodi* 3 cited in the previous section (p. 81 n. 90). From the point of view of this book, it is not relevant, however, whether the historical Stesichorus was acquainted with Pythagoras or, indeed, with the Pythagoreans. The formation of his biographical tradition is undoubtedly influenced by the Pythagorean tradition.

[97] The battle took place around the middle of the sixth century when the Crotonians attacked Locri, a much smaller and weaker city. Locris gained some help from Rhegium, and enjoyed the favour of Delphi (the Locrians outbid the Crotonians by offering a ninth of the booty for the support of the Pythian Apollo, against a tenth). Furthermore, the Dioscuri sent by the Spartans miracuously fought on their side, and also the ghost of Locrian Ajax. The Locrians won the battle. The loss at Sagras was a great blow for

with the "White Rock" in the underworld and only later localized in the Black Sea, Autoleon brought back the message from Helen to Stesichorus. This account belongs most certainly among the stories of *katabasis* so important to the Orphics and Pythagoreans.[98] The saying ascribed to Pythagoras, that the soul of Homer had found its second dwelling-place in Stesichorus, associates Stesichorus with the early Pythagorean theory of reincarnation and metempsychosis.[99] Furthermore, both Pythagoras and Stesichorus had a conflict with Phalaris the tyrant of Acragas in tradition: the poet warned his fellow-citizens against his tyranny; Pythagoras was detained by Phalaris for his political and moral views.[100] And finally a small but interesting detail: Stesichorus used the Pythagorean word Μεσόνυξ for one of the planets known to the ancients (probably for Mars, less likely to Jupiter or Saturn).[101] It is interesting, however, that there is no extant story which would link Stesichorus directly with Pythagoras.[102]

Croton, and only the new influence and guidance of the Pythagoreans some decades later brought the city out from its decline. In 510 Pythagoras, according to tradition, advised the Crotonians to reject the unfair demands of Sybaris which led to the unexpectedly victorious war against this strong and powerful city. See Dunbabin 1948:358–360 and also Burn 1960:375.

[98] See Burkert 1972: ch. 3, especially pp. 152–157. There are accounts of how Pythagoras himself visited the Underworld: Hieron. (fr. 42 Wehrli) ap. Diog. L. 8.21, Hermipp. ap. Diog. L. 8.41, etc.

[99] Antipater in *Anth. Pal.* 7.75:

> Στασίχορον ζαπληθὲς ἀμέτρητον στόμα Μούσας
> ἐκτέρισεν Κατάνας αἰθαλόεν δάπεδον,
> οὗ κατὰ Πυθαγόρεω φυσικὰν φάτιν ἁ πρὶν Ὁμήρου
> ψυχὰ ἐνὶ στέρνοις δεύτερον ᾠκίσατο.

Of course, this might also mean that Stesichorus is very Homeric in his style, cf. [Longin.] *De subl.* 13.3.

[100] See p. 75 and Iambl. *VP* 215–218.

[101] Stesich. 259 PMG (= Choerob. in *Anecd. Gr.* iii.1397 Bekker and Herodian i.45, ii.743 Lenz). See Bicknell 1968:10–12, Campbell 2001:175.

[102] There are some hints, though, which suggest the possible existence of such link. First, the notion that Stesichorus' father was Euphorbus may be connected with the tradition about Euphorbus the previous incarnation of Pythagoras (see p. 65 n. 5). In that case, Stesichorus would be the descendant of Pythagoras' immortal manifestation. Secondly, Stesichorus' brother Mamercus was known also as the son or father of Pythagoras (see p. 67) which would make Stesichorus respectively either the son or uncle of the famous mage.

10. *Formulaic elements in the tradition*

Stesichorus' tradition contains many traditional themes, most of them already discussed in previous sections. The tradition includes an account of Stesichorus' poetic initiation: Apollo taught him the tuning of the lyre while he was still in his mother's womb and at his birth, when he had just reached the light of day, a nightingale sat on his lips and sang a sweet tune.[103] Secondly, the story that Stesichorus was temporarily blinded by angry Helen or her brothers, reminds one the account about Homer whose blindness was (in one version) caused by Helen who was furious with him for the unflattering things he had said about her.[104]

Stesichorus, just as many other poets, had disagreements with authorities: he warned the Himereans against the possible tyranny of Phalaris, Gelon, or some other tyrant. In the warning-story Stesichorus functions effectively as a healer, helping to restore the normal situation in the community. On another occasion he reconciled the enemies who were about to fight by his song and restored peace.[105]

Famous figures are often connected with each other in some way in biographical traditions. Stesichorus is linked with Euclides the founder of Himera, with Mamercus the well-known geometer, and with Hesiod through family; and also with Pythagoras, Phalaris, Gelon, Sappho, Alcaeus, Pittacus, Simonides and Alcman through chronology. He is also connected with important mythological figures such as Helen, Castor and Polydeuces, who caused his temporary blindness and later healed him from it.

Another formulaic feature Stesichorus shares with other poets is inventiveness: the invention of the genre of hymn, and the *metrum angelicum* (a derivation from hexameter which was suited by its rapidity to messengers) are ascribed to him, and he was also believed to have been the first to set up a choir.[106]

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[103] Stes. 281(e) PMG ap. Plin. *NH* 10.82, Christod. *Ecphr*. in *Anth. Pal*. 2.125 ff. For more references of initiation-stories, see p. 208.

[104] *Vita Romana* 5, and p. 73f. below. See also the references to the traditions about Homer, Teiresias and Demodocus, p. 209 n. 26 and 26. Among the explanations of the blindness of a Thracian diviner Phineus of Salmydessus those that the gods maimed him for foretelling the future to the human race, and that Poseidon blinded him for having informed the children of Phrixus of the route from Colchis (Apollod. *Bibl*. 1.9.21).

[105] See p. 77. About the healing motif in other traditions, see p. 214.

[106] Clem. Alex. *Strom*. 1.16.78, Diom. *Ars gramm*. 3, Suda s.v. Στησίχορος.

He also travelled and was sent to exile, gave rise to a couple of proverbs, lived a long life and died a dreadful death, just like other poets.[107] At the age of eighty-five he was murdered, just like Ibycus, Hesiod and Pythagoras.[108] Quite exceptionally however, there is no extant account of Stesichorus' participation in a song contest, stories about his pupils or lovers, his tradition does not contain oracles, and he did not travel to Delphi or Egypt as many other poets used to do.

11. *Conclusions*

The tradition about Stesichorus' life was quite well developed by the Classical period: the Classical authors knew about his home town (Himera), his blindness, his mother (Ctemene or Clymene), several traditions about his father (Hesiod, Euphemus, possibly Euclides) and his brother (Mamercus) who was most probably associated with the Pythagoreans. Classical authors synchronized the poet with Pythagoras and the tyrant Phalaris.

There are few details in the extant traditions of Stesichorus' life which are probably drawn from his poetry. Such details are the accounts about his home town Himera, his temporary blindness, the warnings against a tyrant and being insolent, and perhaps his expulsion from Pallantium. In comparison to other poets' traditions, however, the makers of the tradition about Stesichorus seem to have used the poetry less extensively as a source of information about his life. It may be, perhaps, because much of his poetry was choral and the "I" in the verses was not so easily associated with the poet.

The tradition seems to be a mixture of the Sicilian/Himerean, the Italian/Locrian, and possibly also of the Arcadian/Catanian traditions. The Sicilian/Himerean strand includes the poet's home town Himera, Euclides the founder of the city, as a possible name of his father, and possibly also the story of warning against Phalaris. Also the account of the Himereans who, after their city was destroyed by the Carthaginians, settled at Thermae and set up a statue to their poet of old times, should belong in the Himerean tradition as well. The Arcadian/Catanian strand would contain the name Tisias and the account why and how the poet

[107] See p. 68, 78, p. 72 n. 44, p. 75, p. 78. For travelling and exile as formulaic topics see p. 210 and 211.

[108] About celebrities' long life and terrible death, see p. 216f.

was expelled from Pallantium and his revenge (if it ever existed), his death by the hand of Hicanus, the burial and tomb in Catana and the expression "πάντα ὀκτώ." The Italian/Locrian strand, whose development and transmission was to a great extent influenced by the Pythagoreans, has a link to the story about Hesiod's romance and death at Oinoe, and was probably formed in Ozolean Locris. The account that Hesiod's and Ctemene's/Clymene's son was Stesichorus was probably added to the story in Epizephyrean Locris, possibly by the Mataurians. The impact of the Pythagoreans on the Italian stratum of tradition is clearly visible: the poet's brothers Mamercus and Helianax, his father Euphemus, Euphorbus, or Euetes, the story of the White Island, the poet's synchronisms with Pythagoras and Phalaris, his association with the theory of metempsychosis and reincarnation,—all these details point to the Pythagorean influence. It seems that the Pythagoreans tried to connect Stesichorus to their own tradition as strongly as possible, falling short only in creating a story which would directly link the poet and the philosopher. Since Stesichorus' poetry does not seem to contain anything very important for Pythagorean thought, they were perhaps interested in him simply as a famous poet in the region. Another reason for tying Stesichorus to their own tradition may have been his link with Hesiod, whose genealogical and cosmological poetry was certainly very important to them.