

under 'AK', pp. 343–4) are accurately registered, and valuable information along with a critical evaluation of many of them is provided. Thoughtful comments are made on what R. terms as 'Text-Bild-Problematik' – namely the vexed relationship between the literary and the iconographic sources of ancient myth and the 'iconic turn' as a counterbalance of the traditional priority of poetic texts. R. posits that a change of the *communis opinio* was already observable in the late 'Mittelphase' (1960–2000) and hints at a forthcoming mutation of paradigm (p. 222).

The sections concerning reception ('Rezeptionsgeschichtlicher Ergänzungsbereich') fare well: first period 1920–1960 (pp. 41–50); second period 1960–2000 (pp. 117–68); and the much shorter final period 2000–2020 (pp. 251–306). The dramatic increase in the range of pages indicates that reception has become over the last 100 years a central focus of interest among scholars. It is indeed significant that precisely at a time in which classical studies do not hold sway in schools and universities, the role of ancient myths in modern and contemporary culture has attracted an increase in attention, notwithstanding the current lack of historical consciousness (of which R. repeatedly complains: pp. 3, 174, 187; cf. pp. 189, 251, 290, 297, 333). By reception R. understands notably the presence of myth and manipulation thereof in literature and all sorts of arts. On some occasions books of ample scope, yet with incidental bearing on the reception of myth (like L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson's *Scribes and Scholars*), are included without any plausible reason. Conversely, R. largely ignores the scientific reception of mythology, that is to say, the story of the interpretation of myth, which starts already in antiquity. R. does not take account of (to name just one title) A. Von Hendy's *The Modern Construction of Myth* (2001), and he fails to notice that the second edition of L. Edmunds's *Approaches to Greek Myth* (2014) starts with a new chapter on the reception of Greek myth that the first edition (1990) did not include.

All these lacunae notwithstanding, the volume constitutes a welcome contribution to a blossoming discipline such as ancient mythology. Scholarly production has increased in such a way over the last decades that it has become more and more difficult to grasp in its entirety – and any *selektiver Überblick* would be exposed to criticism.

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## ABOUT AN EARLY FEMALE CLASSICIST

GREENWOOD (D.N.) *Steely-eyed Athena. Wilmer Cave Wright and the Advent of Female Classicists.* (Cambridge Classical Journal Supplement 44.) Pp. viii + 150, ill. Cambridge: The Cambridge Philological Society, 2022. Cased, £60. ISBN: 978-1-913701-42-0.  
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G. presents an intriguing biography of a female pioneer of Classics and ancient history, Wilmer Cave Wright (originally known as Emily France, p. 3), giving a full account of her life and career. Interest in and study of the lives and careers of the female pioneers of the field has been growing, with biographies published in recent years on Grace Harriet Macurdy (B. McManus, *The Drunken Duchess of Vassar: Grace Harriet*

*Macurdy, Pioneering Feminist Classical Scholar* [2017]) and Jane Harrison (who featured in the award-winning work of F. Wade, *Square Haunting: Five Women, Freedom and London Between the Wars* [2020], following the earlier biography by M. Beard, *The Invention of Jane Harrison* [2002]), along with similar works on pioneers in subject areas such as philosophy (e.g. B.J.B. Lipscomb, *The Women Are Up to Something: How Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Mary Midgley, and Iris Murdoch Revolutionized Ethics* [2021]). Alongside these, there is an increasing number of biographical essays such as those collected in the excellent volume edited by R. Wyles and E. Hall (*Women Classical Scholars: Unsealing the Fountain from the Renaissance to Jacqueline de Romilly* [2016]). As a result, this work is the newest in a growing group of biographies of these ‘foremothers’ of classical study, a context that G. recognises (p. 5).

The biography is organised chronologically into three parts, passing through Wright’s early education at Birmingham, Cambridge and Chicago, and first academic posts (pp. 11–49), her initial difficulties at Bryn Mawr and the First World War (pp. 75–106), and finally the later stages of her career and life (pp. 107–17). Part 1, covering Wright’s education and early career, is often the most specifically detailed, and also contains valuable wider context on topics such as the early stages and nature of education at Girton (pp. 21–4) and the development of Chicago University (pp. 33–6). The conclusion (pp. 130–7) is followed by a useful appendix offering a brief timeline of Wright’s life and movements along with the evidence for these, ideal for quick consultation of dates and materials, although at times some of the entries (e.g. ‘Travels’ for Summer 1929, p. 135) might have been a little more specific.

G. has produced a meticulously researched account; along with Wright’s own works, sources consulted include local newspapers, the archives of educational institutions, immigration documents and, in the final section, interviews and correspondence with Wright’s granddaughter, which add an interesting personal touch to the otherwise predominantly academic views that frame the account. There is some particularly valuable discussion of Wright’s scholarship and its reception throughout the book, which sheds special light on how her work and ideas, including her attitudes to Julian, developed across the course of her career and through changing personal circumstances. The thoughtful account of her later interest in medical works, and the drawing out of the ways in which Wright was likely influenced by the medical tragedies she experienced among her loved ones, is particularly fascinating (pp. 113–17).

While the biography is generally readable, at times, the phrasing strikes a jarring note. It is somewhat surprising to read the description of J.P. Postgate’s finding his visits to the village of Girton to teach the female undergraduates of the new college ‘quite worthwhile’ (p. 27) on the grounds of his marrying a student (Edith Allen). Some of the claims made in the conclusion could similarly perhaps benefit from reframing of the language, such as the description of a ‘modern narrative of male oppression of women’ (p. 128) or the (somewhat tangential) accusation of modern scholars being inclined to plagiarise (pp. 126–7), as being key to the diminished legacy of former academics in the field, such as Wright.

The first of these issues also draws attention to an area that perhaps could have been fruitfully explored more fully in the work, in dialogue with some of the other biographies noted above. As with the projection of Postgate’s views, G., in a rather psychological approach, notes Wright’s ‘attachment to successive older male mentors’ as being connected to an estrangement from her father, despite observing that no records of such exist (p. 15). This may well reflect the situation on Wright’s part, but it is striking that studies of other pioneering female Classicists can also point to significant male scholars whose

role in their education and early careers was transformative, and without whose support their careers may not have advanced at all (given the educational and social context at the turn of the twentieth century, this is perhaps not surprising). Gilbert Murray, for example, performed this mentoring role for Grace Macurdy (McManus [2017], p. 204) and Isobel Henderson among others (C. Stray, *Gilbert Murray Reassessed* [2007], p. 1), and Tenney Frank and George Warr have been noted by Hall and Wyles for their roles in supporting the careers of women Classicists (Wyles and Hall [2020], p. 16). G.'s second part of the account of the difficulties faced by Wright in dealing with the Bryn Mawr principal, Martha Carey Thomas, in Part 3 of the volume (pp. 77–98), reflects in a more sustained manner on the ways in which this situation mirrored that experienced by Grace Macurdy at the hands of Vassar's principal, Abby Leach (pp. 93–8), and demonstrates the ways in which drawing together the careers of these women can demonstrate common threads in the 'advent of female Classicists' (from G.'s subtitle). It is certainly an opportunity for future study, therefore, now that more of these biographies are being produced, and one that perhaps could have been taken up more fully across all parts of the volume.

However, this indication of further avenues for exploration should not undermine the success of this work overall. G. has produced a valuable and stimulating account of an under-recognised figure. The work serves its aim of demonstrating why Wright deserves much fuller recognition than she has perhaps received until now (p. 128), and it is to be hoped that it draws further attention to Wright among the female pioneers of the field.

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