

## BOOK REVIEW

*Eurydice and the Birth of Macedonian Power.* By ELIZABETH DONNELLY CARNEY. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. 200. Hardback, \$65.00. ISBN: 978-0-190-28053-6.

Carney's book on the life of Eurydice of Macedon is an important contribution to our knowledge of royal women. More broadly, it is an extremely useful overview of the political situation in Macedon in the time before Alexander. Like many ancient women, Eurydice is largely defined by her relationship to men: daughter of Sirras, wife of Amyntas III, mother of Philip II and grandmother of Alexander the Great. Eurydice lived at a fascinating time—when Macedon's emerging power gave it a seat at the international table—and was a key player in the events that led to her sons' rise to power (her two elder sons ruled before Philip II), supporting them against other possible successors to the throne. Carney examines her public role, the earliest known for a Macedonian royal woman, but in the end we are left with more questions than answers, not least the question of whether some sources have anything to do with Eurydice's life at all (for instance, the so-called Tomb of Eurydice in Vergina, whose occupant is unknown).

This book is short, 117 pages before the notes, and falls into six chapters. The introduction contextualizes Eurydice's life and gives an overview of our sources, Macedonian monarchy and the roles of women in Macedon. Carney also builds on Daniel Ogden's term "bastardizing," pointing out that while Ogden correctly points to the public smearing of a potential successor's birth as a propagandistic tool, frequently the successor's mother was the target, thus explaining the stories about Eurydice in which she is an adulterer and murderer of her two elder sons. Indeed, this analysis can be more broadly applied to other women in the ancient world and makes this book worth reading for that contribution alone.

Chapter 2 looks at Eurydice's marriage to Amyntas III and his rule. Especially interesting is the discussion of Eurydice's contested ethnicity and its implications. The rule of her sons is covered in the third chapter, ending with Philip II's consolidation of power and legitimacy. Chapter 4 examines Eurydice's relationships

with her sons and reports of her adultery and filicide. It also contains discussion of a speech of Aeschines (2.27-9), in which he paints Eurydice as a “super mother” (75) responsible for bringing international support to her sons, essentially guaranteeing their safety and rise to power in Macedon. This is the strongest evidence for her political action and public importance, but is buried in the middle of the book (and chapter).

The fifth chapter, focused on her public image in her lifetime, looks at dedications, monuments, physical images and inscriptions. Particularly striking is an epigram preserved in Plutarch’s corpus (Plut. *Mor.* 14b-c) concerning Eurydice’s education. According to the epigram, she learned to read and write when her sons were in their adolescence. Carney is mostly interested in a textual emendation, which would change the dedication of the epigram to female citizens (and not the Muses) as well as the location of the original inscription (no physical copy exists). I would have liked to read more about what this could tell us about the education of women and literacy in Macedonia. It is also worth considering that this epigram may not be genuine and instead is part of later reception of the queen.

Finally, the last chapter concerns Eurydice’s public image after her death and is mostly focused on the Tomb of Eurydice, possibly the queen’s final resting place. At the end of this chapter, Carney briefly introduces some intriguing topics that deserve more attention: the importance of the name Eurydice in myth and in history; the name-change of her great-granddaughter Adea to Eurydice and what this tells us about Eurydice’s legacy; Odyssean figures as models for Macedonian monarchs and Eurydice’s connection to Penelope. I wish they had been dealt with more fully.

I would recommend this book to anyone who wants a quick history of Macedon in the time of Eurydice and who is curious about Eurydice herself. Mostly, the writing is very accessible and fit for a wide audience, but at times Carney assumes prior knowledge, as when Eurydice’s situation is compared to that of Arsinoë II without greater explanation (63), or when figures with the same name are not distinguished from each other clearly. Perhaps a concession to its short length, parts seem written in a rush with several intriguing ideas introduced at the end (as I mentioned above) and several distracting typos. It is hard not to compare this book to others in Oxford’s Women in Antiquity Series, especially Carney’s own *Arsinoë of Egypt and Macedon* (2013), which is more exhaustive and polished.

Since Arsinoë left us much more information about her life, however, that comparison may well be unfair. Overall, Carney expertly guides the reader through a complicated period and the life of an elusive figure, who is well worth getting to know. I hope to see more scholarship on Eurydice inspired by this work.

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