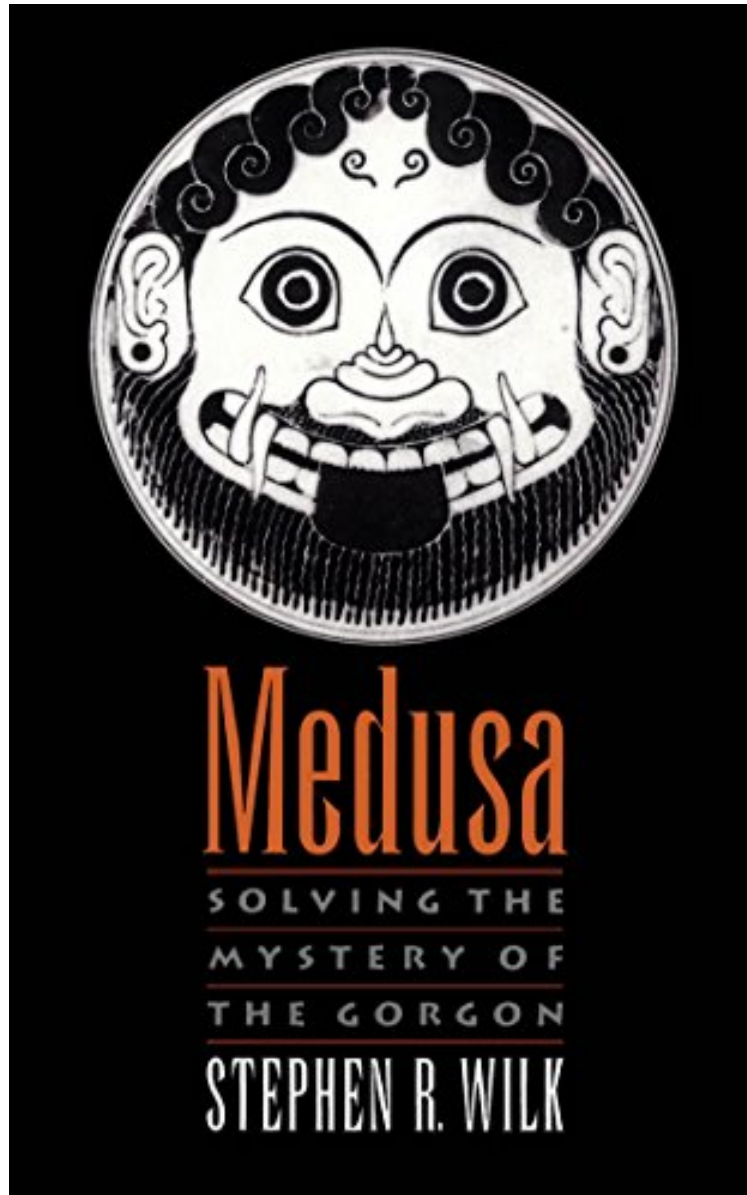


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Medusa: Solving the Mystery of the Gorgon

Stephen R. Wilk

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Stephen R. Wilk : Medusa: Solving the Mystery of the Gorgon before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Medusa: Solving the Mystery of the Gorgon:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent source for research By K. Olsen Not for the casual reader, this is more suited for someone wanting serious research. The author explores the myth and history of the Gorgon from every conceivable angle and cites his works wonderfully. Just wish it were more entertaining. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Compelling detective work on a Greek myth; but not as successful at solving it as author

thinksBy Nickolas PappasWilk takes us through the many appearances of the Gorgon with the patience and wide-ranging intelligence of a good detective. Some people may be put off by the number and duration of the tangents he pursues, from astronomical observations about variable stars to the technology of gutters and downspouts around the world. I was not. From that point of view I was impressed at how much information he presented with high accuracy in accessible language. But the big solution keeps getting hinted at all the way through the book -- Just wait! I have another explanation! -- and it's a bit of a letdown. Wilk's solution is that the Gorgon face simulates the face of a decomposed corpse. Problem? From the beginning of the book he gives us Gorgons as women, as sisters, Medusa the woman. He even quotes someone who quotes a schoolboy saying the Gorgons look like women but more horrible. Yet this purported terrific solution doesn't so much as comment on the fact that the Gorgons were women. If the essential thing about them is that they look like corpses, there should be male Gorgons in mythology too, and there aren't. I don't say Wilk has to solve every mystery about these monsters, but he does at least have to acknowledge that this major string is left dangling. When structuralist readings come up along the way Wilk is pretty dismissive. This was an inherent weakness in his presentation, and the incompleteness of his own solution makes it worse. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. **FINALLY, REALISTIC EXPLANATIONS FOR THE GORGONS** By Brad Schaefer I had great fun reading this book. Wilk explains many of the features of the Greek myths associated with the Gorgons and shows why they appear worldwide. I appreciate his very broad coverage of all aspects of the myth. Even more, I appreciate his simple and practical answers which ring true. Wilk does not present his explanations as having been "proven", but this is refreshing and realistic since there will now never be sufficient data from the ancient past to prove anything. Certainly, his answers are better supported than all of the previous claims, some of which used to make me chuckle even though I knew of nothing to replace them. Wilk avoids the seductive trap of trying to explain all the details with some grand "Theory of Everything", instead pulling his persuasive and original ideas from astronomy, ornithology, architecture, and forensic medicine. His work provides a detailed case study of how myths evolve and are reinvented to suit new purposes. I strongly recommend this new book to anyone interested in the topic of myths.

Medusa, the Gorgon, who turns those who gaze upon her to stone, is one of the most popular and enduring figures of Greek mythology. Long after many other figures from Greek myth have been forgotten, she continues to live in popular culture. In this fascinating study of the legend of Medusa, Stephen R. Wilk begins by refamiliarizing readers with the story through ancient authors and classical artwork, then looks at the interpretations that have been given of the meaning of the myth through the years. A new and original interpretation of the myth is offered, based upon astronomical phenomena. The use of the gorgoneion, the Face of the Gorgon, on shields and on roofing tiles is examined in light of parallels from around the world, and a unique interpretation of the reality behind the gorgoneion is suggested. Finally, the history of the Gorgon since classical times is explored, culminating in the modern use of Medusa as a symbol of Female Rage and Female Creativity.

"The author's twenty years of devoted and penetrating research has netted so engagingly seined a catch of fact and fancy that he is close to persuasive about [the origins of Medusa's] gaze....Wilk is open, judicious, and critically candid about the broad collage he has so inventively explored. Good to the last line of text, this rich book never even flirts with the sin of being boring."--Journal of the History of Astronomy" As the author of this interesting new book demonstrates, the Gorgon was not only an unusually popular subject among Greek and Roman writers and artists, but she has also remained a favorite mythological character in modern times.... Wilk's in-depth study is a welcome addition to the scholarship about her, containing both extensive review of previous interpretative theories and adding quite a few insightful new ideas of his own."--The Classical Outlook About the Author Senior optical systems engineer