

Euripides' *Electra*), Rehm pays great attention to the play's staging and production. The book is written in an accessible style that does not patronise: the reader is taught a rich array of technical vocabulary (occasionally in German academic terminology, as well as Greek). Black-and-white illustrations are a meaningful inclusion, continually prompting one to think about the play's performability — a matter clearly never far from the author's mind.

From the beginning, Euripides' play is put into contexts of all kinds. The book opens with a concise, but thorough, chapter on the conventions of Attic drama. Aristotle is freely invoked; so too is Bertolt Brecht. There follows a detailed set of plot summaries, with a third chapter on Euripides' treatment of the existing material from the Homeric poems onwards. (This section is mercifully free from being mired, as so many books on the *Electra* plays are, in unresolvable philological debates about whether Sophocles' or Euripides' *Electra* came first. Happily though, it is full of pertinent detail about content from the *Oresteia* that might have primed an audience's expectations.) Chapter four offers detailed character analyses, which show a great sensitivity to the demands on the actors involved in a production of the play, while Chapter five makes language its focus. This section identifies various linguistic curiosities, encouraging the reader to notice recurrent imagery, underlying themes, and metaphors that risk being lost in translation. (All quotations in Greek are transliterated.) Chapter six focuses on scenic detail, costumes, and props. Rehm vividly illustrates his ideas about gruesome matters (such as beheading and dismemberment) by thoughtful comparisons from elsewhere in Euripides' oeuvre — including the fragmentary plays. Chapter seven addresses matters of sexuality and gender: the reader is given plenty of thought-provoking background information for understanding ancient conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Chapter eight combines discussion of the role of the divine in the play with matters of social class and heroic values in everyday life, closing with a memorable assertion:

'One can imagine a Hollywood agent pitching Euripides' play as an innovative hybrid — eroticized melodrama and slasher film — but one that merits a GP ('General Public') rating due to its classical pedigree.' (p. 113.)

Such sentences are characteristic of the clarity of Rehm's prose, and his ability to relate salient details from the play to modern-day sensibilities.

Finally, there is a chapter, 'Electra through the looking glass', on the afterlives of Euripides' play. Inevitably for an introductory volume, we could hardly expect an exhaustive survey; instead, Rehm focuses on various noteworthy examples of the play's *Nachleben*, namely the play's reception within antiquity and in the 20th century. (Freud and Jung receive only a brief mention, no doubt to widespread relief.) The discussion instead dwells on translations and adaptations by Gilbert Murray, Jean Giraudoux, Marguerite Yourcenar, and Eugene O'Neill.

In his writing, Rehm constantly conceives of the play as not (just) a text, but as an experience: throughout, he makes sure we never cease to imagine the play's events unfolding in space and time, of the actors reaching for their props, of the characterisation evolving, and of the audience always on edge. This volume will prove accessible as a study-guide for students who know little of Greek theatre, but also contains plenty of meaty information for

their teachers to savour. I recommend this volume not just for students studying the text in translation, but for anyone considering a performance or rehearsed reading of Euripides' play.

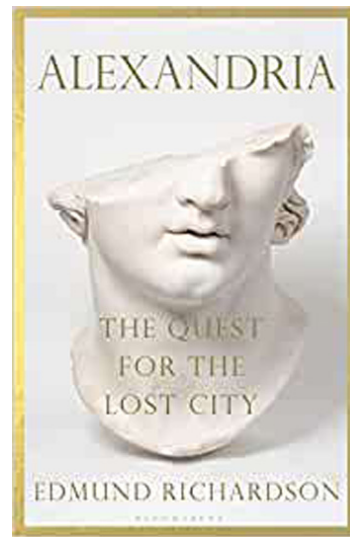
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Alexandria: The Quest for The Lost City

Richardson (E.), pp. x + 328, maps, colour pls.
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Fair warning: as Classics teachers this book is only of the most tangential interest to Latin, Greek or Classical Civilisation syllabuses. It is certainly interesting to those fascinated by the politics and challenges of 19th century archaeology and the more obscure aspects of Alexander's conquests.

The tome is a beautiful one. Seductively bordered in gold with lettering of the same and the pale marble image of a shattered bust of Alexander against a white background, the cover hints at mystery. The 328 pages include helpful

maps, and colour images of paintings and photographs of the main characters, locations and discoveries in the story.

It must be clear, first of all, that this is not a book about the familiar Egyptian Alexandria. This is not even a book about the discovery of one of Alexander the Great's auto-eponymous cities. This is, in a way, only loosely about the act of searching for the rumoured city, renamed by Alexander according to myth, and nestled in the Hindu Kush. There are, further, no detailed descriptions of the archaeology, no extended scenes describing the discovery of artefacts and the items themselves are granted little examination or discussion beyond the alluring conclusion that Buddhists and Greeks lived together, learned from one another and that another language was discovered.

Instead, this is a narrative woven in the shadow of a rather nebulous Alexandria - the search for the city being less integral to the story than the politics and vices of the East India Company. The search is a coordinating theme to the politics and machinations of the time and, if this is about Alexandria, this Alexandria is as obscure to the reader as it is to the protagonist Charles Masson.

Charles Masson (born James Lewis), after defecting from the army of the East India Company, found his way to Afghanistan and after a shaky start, learning the vital skills of deception and

braggadocio, started to discover coins and curiously Greek-influenced Buddhist figures somewhere in the vicinity of Bagram Airport. These artefacts set him on a search for the fabled city of Alexander. Aided, abetted, and often hindered by a wide cast of characters, Masson amassed huge amounts of materials that, taken by the East India Company, were largely sold off or lost until the British Museum finally gained control of the collection. Richardson takes time also to follow the perspective of 'the second Alexander' Alexander Burnes, the Scottish explorer and diplomat as it coincided and connected with Charles Masson. Richardson also writes from the perspective of Claude Wade, the spy master who blackmailed Masson into informing the East India Company about the business of the Afghan court of Dost Mohammad Khan.

But this book is essentially about Masson - a story of his love for Afghanistan, his dealings with its rulers and the iniquitous actions of the East India Company. The story illustrates the origins of Afghanistan's conflict with Britain - the incompetence, stupidity and greed of the British and how the excitement of acquisition blended with an ephemeral interest in explanation and the early logic of archaeology. One might even argue that to an extent Richardson has fallen into Masson's own fault - writing a 'condemnation of British imperialism, the East India Company and the invasion of Afghanistan' (p.184) over the elucidation of Masson's discoveries.

It is, however, a masterful and very readable narrative that weaves countless sources together, garnered from across the world, and intertwines them with ruthlessly attested fancy and speculation. Richardson is a writer who consistently twists the reader with anxiety by making ominous pronouncements: 'then, at the last minute, Masson made one of the greatest mistakes of his life' and despite the ferociously academic sourcing, Richardson often uses a TV journalistic voice '...like many other stories about Charles Masson, it may not be entirely true.'

Nonetheless, it is quite impossible not to love Edmund Richardson by the end of this book and the curators of the British Museum just as much. The latter for their painstaking and methodical collection of Charles Masson's work and Richardson for a masterly renaissance of Masson's reputation and character and for the insight and compassion that made him weep for the dead explorer in a London library nearly 200 years later and all his efforts to bring to life 'despite the best efforts of almost everyone involved' and the author's own cancer, the 'true story' of Charles Masson.

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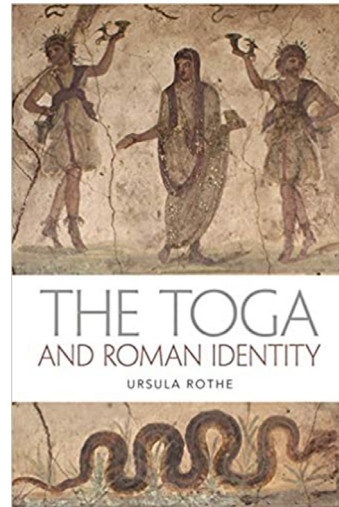
The Toga and Roman Identity

Rothe (U.) Pp x+241, ills. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Paper, £28.99 (Cased, £90). ISBN: 978-1-350-19441-0.

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In her Acknowledgments (pp.viii-ix), Rothe states that she wrote this book out of frustration, as there was no comprehensive study on the social or cultural importance of the toga. As someone who



has shared that frustration, I can say with certainty that this book not only fills this gap in classical scholarship, but also comprehensively rebuts the claim that togas were of fringe importance to Romans and their neighbours.

Rothe does not shy away from breadth; her study encompasses the earliest literary and physical examples of togas, and runs all the way through to late antiquity, and while most of the evidence is either Roman or Italian, there is also a chapter on the perception of the toga in the provinces. In those periods where we have the most evidence, the late Republic and early Principate, Rothe also breaks down her study into certain cultural themes, which are manhood, social status, and politics. Undoubtedly this book has set the standard for any future scholarship on the topic simply with the number of references that Rothe draws upon throughout. Additionally, the clear demarcation of topics and time periods into chapters will allow readers to answer specific queries.

The book is a fine example of an interdisciplinary approach to classical questions. Rothe draws upon very many ancient writers, not only those who directly describe togas, but also those who employ clothing as a metaphor, or use standards of dress to characterise people and their actions. Rothe uses these references to demonstrate and prove her assertion that the toga was not just an icon of Roman civilisation, but a cultural touchstone at all social strata, over many centuries. As usual, the best written evidence applies to the elites of the late Republic and early Principate, which makes Rothe's chapter on politics particularly convincing (p.101ff.). As the written evidence becomes more allusive, Rothe's interpretations can be wilful, such as her assertion that Martial and Juvenal provide good evidence of the financial burden of the toga (p.91 ff.), despite having previously dismissed as comic exaggeration Juvenal's assertion that the toga was not worn in provincial cities (p.85).

Rothe brings in as much physical evidence as possible, while acknowledging the absence of textiles in the archaeological record as a significant hindrance. The key benefit of prioritising material culture alongside literature is that Rothe is able to write with authority on the non-elites, who are understudied in this area. Rothe mostly analyses funerary and public monuments, and coinage, and writes convincingly when extrapolating from evidence which is by nature abstruse. Especially striking is the section on certain members of the Roman 'middle-class' who were entitled but chose not to wear the toga in monumental depictions, possibly to emphasise their status as skilled artisans (pp.96-99). Rothe argues that this action paradoxically exposes the significance of the garment they eschewed, as its absence is as much of a statement as its inclusion.

Rothe's commendable integration of a wide variety of ancient sources is the strength of this work, but the practice of embedding some quotations, almost always in English alone, and otherwise simply referring to others makes the reader reliant on Rothe's interpretations. This is one of the greatest failings of the book, as it does not facilitate critical engagement with Rothe's conclusions, many of which are certainly interpretative, without giving the full