

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD STONEMAN (1951–2025)

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Richard Stoneman (1951-2025) was a remarkable person; he was known as a Classicist, editor, and lecturer. Born in Devon (near Exeter, UK), he studied Classics at the University of Oxford (New College). He then spent about thirty years working as a Classics editor, mainly at Routledge and I.B. Tauris, overseeing the publication of many important works in Classical studies. His kindness, attention to details, and love for the subject made generations of researchers entrust their work to him. After retiring from his full-time editorial career in 2006, Richard devoted himself to research, writing, and teaching. He joined the University of Exeter as an Honorary Visiting Professor in the Department of Classics and Ancient History, and served as President of the Classical Association (UK) in 2009-2010. His research interests ranged from Alexander the Great and his world reception to Greek history, literature, myths, and legends; from the Achaemenids to Graeco-Indian cultural interactions.

I was lucky to meet Richard with his wife Althea at an international conference on Alexander the Great in Wrocław (Poland) back in 2013, and we kept in touch ever since. At that time I was a student taking my first steps into the study of the Greek reception of Alexander the Great, and I was thrilled to meet Richard, “the prolific Alexander-historian”. Yet what immediately struck me the most was his gentle personality: at the conference he encouraged young researchers, smiled warmly to the people around him, and engaged in cheerful conversations with everybody. From our very first meeting I felt that he was a real gentleman, and I wished more academics were like him. I met Richard again in 2016 at the Celtic Classics Conference in Dublin; we sat next to each other and, during one of our conversations, I confessed to him that I wanted him to be my external examiner during my VIVA (doctoral thesis defense) at the University of Liverpool. His face lit up and with a big smile he immediately answered that he would be pleased to read my thesis and act as external examiner. Richard became “my academic daddy”; we often joked about it and we took “family pictures” at every conference where we met thereafter.

Our fascination with Alexander and his receptions was not the only passion we shared: Richard was also interested in the continuity of Hellenism and loved ancient and modern languages, travelling (he was the Chairman of Westminster Classic Tours), and meeting other cultures. Besides Ancient Greek and Latin, he knew Modern Greek, Italian, German, French, and had studied Turkish and Persian; in the last years of his life, he took Chinese classes and learnt to play the mandolin! He was an avid learner, an open-minded traveler, a good cook, and a caring family man. The two things I admired the most in Richard were his immense curiosity and kindness. These qualities made him the remarkable researcher he was: through his writings he opened Classics to a wider audience, producing anthologies and travel guides such as *A Literary Companion to Travel in Greece* (Harmondsworth, Penguin 1984) and *Across the Hellespont: A Literary Guide to Turkey* (London, Hutchinson 1987; paperback reissue I.B. Tauris 2010).

Richard published far too many papers, edited volumes, and books to list them all here (even he could not keep the count!), but I would like to mention a few, to celebrate his sharp mind, wide range of interest, and elegant writing style. Among his contributions to Greek literature and history (and beyond) are:

- *Greek Mythology: An Encyclopaedia of Myth and Legend* (London, HarperCollins 1991).
- *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context* (ed., with J.R. Morgan, London, Routledge 1994).
- *Pindar* (*Understanding Classics* series. London, I.B. Tauris 2013).
- *Xerxes: A Persian Life* (London, Yale University Press 2015).
- *The Greek Experience of India: from Alexander to the Indo-Greeks* (Princeton, Princeton University Press 2019).
- *Megasthenes' Indica: A New Translation of the Fragments with Commentary* (Oxon, Routledge Classical Translations 2022).

Among his contributions to the study of the historical and legendary Alexander, I recommend:

- *The Greek Alexander Romance* (London, Penguin 1991).
- *Legends of Alexander the Great* (London, Everyman 1994. Second edition: I.B. Tauris 2012).
- *Alexander the Great* (London-New York, Routledge 1997; second edition: 2004).
- *Il Romanzo di Alessandro*. 3 vols. Rome, Mondadori/Fondazione Lorenzo Valla. Edition and commentary of the three ancient Greek (and one Latin) recensions (Italian translation by T. Gargiulo). Vol. I: 2007; volume II: 2012, and volume III (still forthcoming).
- *Alexander the Great: a Life in Legend* (New Haven, Yale University Press 2007).
- *The Book of Alexander the Great* (English translation of the Modern Greek *Phyllada tou Megalexantrou*). (London, I.B. Tauris 2012).

- *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, edited with Kyle Erickson and Ian Netton (*Ancient Narrative Supplementum*. Groningen, Barkhuis Publishing 2012).



I would like to conclude with an anecdote that capture Richard's kindness and the generosity he showed towards young scholars. At the end of 2016 I completed my thesis and I handed it over to my supervisor Prof Christopher Tuplin and my friend and colleague Dr. Marco Perale, asking them to submit it to the library (as required for the completion of doctoral studies at the University of Liverpool) on my behalf, since I had accepted a job in Hong Kong, starting on January 3rd, 2017. Richard agreed to come to Liverpool for my VIVA during the Easter break, as I could not miss days at work. Thus in April I flew back from Hong Kong to Liverpool to defend my thesis –though I must confess that the change of climate and jag-lag were quite a challenge. I reached the room designated for my VIVA so cold and exhausted from the long trip that I scarcely had the strength to be nervous! Richard was standing there by the table with his hand on the copy of thesis the library had send him. He welcomed me with a warm smile, and while I was taking off my coat and scarf, he simply said: “You should publish this”. That single sentence turned one of the most dreaded moment in a PhD student's life into one of the best of my career so far. Then I sat down and had one of the most enjoyable conversations about the Greek Reception of Alexander the Great I have ever had. I will always be grateful to Richard for believing in me and for supporting so many of us.