

Richard Stoneman (1951–2025)

by Robert Parker, with advice from
Andrew Wallace-Hadrill



Richard Stoneman was a man of many sides – Classical scholar who wrote prolifically on Classics, the Classical heritage, Alexander and the Alexander Romance; publisher deeply interested in the books that he published and authors he encouraged; traveller (to India among other places, in the footsteps of Alexander) and organiser of Classical tours to Turkey; and, crucially, loyal friend and devoted family man.

The horrors of life at a traditional boarding school (Rugby) for a sport-hating intellectual were mitigated by civilised and inspiring teachers such as Keith MacLennan, and

scholarly contemporaries who became lifelong friends such as Fred Curzon and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill. He read Classics at New College from 1970 to 1974, where, apart from appearing as Pentheus (not typecast!) in a production of *Bacchae* in Greek, he was taught by the (again) inspiring Geoffrey de Ste Croix, and acquired the lifelong interest in Alexander which found expression not only in a string of publications (including those on Greece and India) but also in the name Alexander that he and his wife Althea gave their son. (Their daughter, however, was Christina, not e.g. Rhoxane.)

His graduate work on Pindar led to four articles and, later, a short monograph, but in most of his writings he turned more to history and the Classical heritage. Those later writings are indeed so numerous that controversy exists among his friends as to their number (and it is too late to test whether he could do better than Eratosthenes, whose forgetfulness about his output earned him the sobriquet *bibliolathas*, ‘book-forgetter’): they are certainly not fewer than twenty, on some views (more on this below) massively more.

A few highlights, chosen partly to illustrate the breadth of his interests: *Daphne into Laurel* (Duckworth, 1982), an anthology of translations of Classical poetry by English poets; *A Literary Companion to Travel in Greece* (Harmondsworth, 1984), with a Turkish follow up, *Across the Hellespont* (I.B. Tauris, 2010); *A Luminous Land: Artists discover Greece* (Los Angeles, 1998); *Pseudo Callisthenes*, Il Romanzo di Alessandro, in the bilingual Fondazione Valla series (Milan, 2007); *Land of Lost Gods: The Search for Classical Greece* (ed. 2., London, 2010); *The Ancient Oracles: Making the Gods Speak* (Newhaven, 2011); *Megasthenes*, *Indica: a new translation of the fragments with commentary* (London, 2011); *Xerxes: a Persian Life* (Newhaven, 2016); and *The Greek Experience of India: from Alexander to the Indo-Greeks* (Princeton, 2019).

This last was perhaps his masterpiece, but for much more turn to SOLO, the Oxford University library catalogue, and wallow in the rather baffling (but many are genuine) 685 hits that you will find under his name! With his many and varied interests, Richard lived life to the full, and it is sad that that full living was curtailed by cancer in his early seventies.