

## Preface

The study of Roman dress is about five hundred years old now. It started with much flourish and enthusiasm in the 16th century, and interest in the subject has changed over the centuries, as have points of view. The interest our society has in traditional Classical studies is decreasing. In terms of the *longue durée*, European humanism as a model for intellectual life comes to an end in the Computer Age. In Germany, ‘traditional’ culture and elite intellectual pastimes are dissolving and quickly losing ground. Knowledge of ancient European languages is in retreat, and this could well be the last book on dress and dress terms that is written in a philological manner. In a mixed global culture of international mass media, the internet, and consumerism, the traditional culture I was brought up in only leaves symbolical traces. In this nostalgic feeling of loss and of reshaping, I felt very close to the people I wrote about. In the first century BCE, the Romans seem to have experienced something similar, though on a smaller scale. As to dress, traditional Roman dress culture metamorphosed into a new cosmopolitan style that combined all sorts of regional elements. Augustus tried to preserve some of the traditional Roman garments like the *toga* and the *stola*, but his cultural policies just blocked the trend for a century. Then his cultural measures were gone for good and remained but a memory from a distant Roman past. It was maybe for these personal reasons that the narrative of transformation and cultural flux readers will find in this book attracted me most.

I am still surprised at me having written a book about a cultural topic I had never dreamt of writing about, and besides this, one that ignores the traditional borders limiting the diverse branches of Classical scholarship in Germany. In looking back, it now appears to me as a mixture of my scholarly upbringing and my personal hobby-horsical interests in modern cultural history. The result will perhaps be appreciated in its entirety by only few readers. And yet, it seemed for me the only way to tackle the complexities of a seemingly trivial, though in fact very difficult subject.

When I started busying myself with Roman dress about ten years ago, I was led on by curiosity and ventured into what was a *terra incognita* to me. I did not know more about Roman dress than a Classicist raised on the cultural stereotypes from his books would: The Roman men wore the tunic and the *toga*. And the Roman women? I was not so sure as to this and therefore wanted to find it out. When my first reading proved unsatisfactory, I got more and more involved, and a scholarly pastime turned into a serious enterprise. Initially, I had planned to write about all Roman dress, but my plans proved overly ambitious, and so I focused on women’s clothing, which I thought was more interesting. My short trip became a long journey.

What I saw on it was not all to the best. Archaeological studies had advanced much thanks to the natural sciences, but linguistic studies were lagging far behind. They were still, to be honest, at the level they had reached in the 19th century. There were many modern archaeological case studies, but no modern general history of Roman

dress these could relate to. The important centre ground looked strangely undefined and blurred. What was the reason? Could a modern scientific cultural history of Roman dress still be written? And if so, how could it be done? Was dress history a serious scholarly topic at all? And where to begin?

For a start, I had decided to turn to the century of ripe optimism that laid the basis for modern historical dress studies: the age of Historicism in the 19th century. However, my analysis of the works on dress accomplished in that period ended in partial iconoclasm. Most scholars were outstanding intellectuals in their times without whom our understanding of texts would not be what it is today. They all ploughed larger fields than we can do today, but, in consequence, ameliorated them in haste and, sometimes, without suitable tools. No wonder then that not all weeds had been rooted out. As Horace says: *neglectis urenda filix innascitur agris*. There were serious shortcomings. Many mistaken hypotheses had to be refuted and many new ones had to be put forward. I applied methods I had been taught in my academic career, acquiring some new skills along the way. As to theory, I did not find much help in existing works on ancient dress either, and I had to lean on philosophical works instead. In addition, I browsed some general histories of dress and fashion for inspiration and encouragement. I read many books on modern cultural history, and though many of them were not very 'scientific' as to method, most of them were at least entertaining.

The large books of my predecessors show sufficiently that mine is not the only appropriate approach to the topic. During my work, I also felt like I was communicating with them. Why did *they* study Roman dress, and how did *they* feel while doing it? I found that my enthusiasm for the subject was similar to theirs, but that my voice sounded more technical and more metallic than theirs. It was also more fractured. Their books radiate with the confidence that the rediscovery of Antiquity would be a boon for future life. Mine is written in a pensive mood, looking back, and with a feeling of farewell. Different times produce different persons and books, and my book simply is a reflection of this. Moreover, my own perspective on Roman dress has changed much over the last ten years. This too left its traces. The various discourses to which I connected over the years are inscribed in the various parts of this book. The philological, historical, and the archaeological are most visible and stand at its centre, but there is also a more philosophical one that lies behind them and is as dear to me.

The entire book would not have been written in this form without the help of others. The first to mention is my friend and archaeological colleague Joachim Raeder. He raised my interest in ancient dress and supported me the whole time by patiently answering all my questions concerning the archaeological evidence. He drew my attention to things I had overlooked and reined in my fantasy when it went astray. The identification and the precise description of many garments would not have been possible without him. Talking with him often relieved me when despair about the never ending story seemed near. The depictions of the archaeological evidence and his archaeological contribution at the end are the visible signs of the imprint he made on this book. I thank him for ten years of friendship and learned discussion.

I was also fortunate to have help from some other friends and colleagues. They checked my bolder hypotheses (and improved on them) and encouraged me to put them forward. Konrad Heldmann and Markus Stein read through the entire manuscript. Thomas Riesenweber commented on the thorny philological parts (A, C, D). Bruno Bleckmann and Steffi Grundmann read the historical part (B). In addition, the late Rudolf Kassel commented on chapters A 1 and A 7, Marcus Deufert on chapters A 4 and A 5, Armin Eich on chapter B 4, Berit Hildebrandt on B 9, Alessio Mancini on D 5, and Tilo Klaiber on the epilogue. Hilmar Klinkott discussed many general methodological questions with me and helped me test new ideas. Hans Rupprecht Goette generously contributed photographs. I thank all these scholars very much for their help.

Writing on a complex subject matter and for different groups of readers was a difficult task. As readers will find, I tried to combine the qualities of a monograph and a dictionary. Those interested in the broad outlines, may turn to the various introductions; those interested in particulars, like a specific text, a dress term, or an item of dress, may consult the individual chapters. I also tried to write in a language that also non-specialists might understand without difficulty. The book needed three drafts to achieve its final form, two in German and one in English. Since English is not my mother tongue, help was needed and found in the person of Frederik Kleiner. Revising the book together with him in English was a pleasure. He mended my linguistic blunders, cut back scholarly lingo, and inspired me with a sense of humor that my Teutonic scholarly *persona* is not too much inclined to. Karsten Wolff patiently supported me in computer matters and in mastering the intricacies of LaTeX. My research assistants Kristin Wodka, Leandros Manos, and Fabian Lange helped with the manuscript and the indexes. My home university, the Christian-Albrechts-Universität in Kiel, provided free library access and a warm office and German taxpayers kept me in bread and butter. The book is put on open access so that they can see what is done in the ivory tower.

Last but not least, my thanks go to my family. My wife Petra bore all my scholarly and other personal whims with patience and also helped with the final layout. My daughters Alma and Julia taught me that life is about living—a most precious lesson to a Classical scholar. I dedicate this book to them in gratitude.

Kiel, July 2022

Jan Radicke

