

THE SKINNY

Scotland's cutting-edge culture and listings magazine

ELEPHANTINA BY ANDREW DRUMMOND

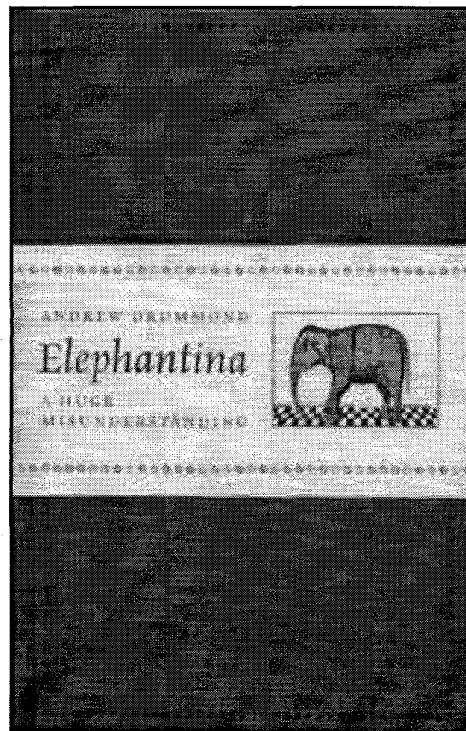
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A cross between a historical novel and a comic one.

Elephantina is a cross between a historical novel and a comic one. Drummond invents the journals of one Gilbert Orum, assistant to the very real Dr Patrick Blair, who was the first man in Britain to dissect an Elephant. The book is Orum's account of how this came to happen, written opportunistically when Blair was in jail for his part in the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion. In part, this book resembles Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* in that an editor's note introduces a very unreliable narrative. But it is also oddly reminiscent of the footnote-heavy work of authors like David Foster Wallace and Nicholson Baker, in that the editor provides constant interjections throughout for comic effect. How far any reader finds this novel funny depends on how far they are willing to go along with the contrast of styles. For example, the editor's opinion – in, of course, a footnote – that Orum is of deficient character simply because he gets out of bed late is the kind of joke that can result; a good one for a student audience. If you are willing to accept the odd combinations of style, *Elephantina* is a very pleasant and even rewarding read. [Ryan Agee]



Elephantina

BOOK REVIEW

Rating 
 Book title Elephantina
 Author Andrew Drummond

MORE INFO

Out Now. Published by Polygon. Cover Price £9.99 hardback.

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