Some Reference Sources for Classical Studies

I. Classical Encyclopedias

The Pauly-Wissowa Family

RE

Usually referred to as the RE or the Pauly-Wissowa, this comprehensive work remains the fundamental encyclopedia of Greco-Roman antiquity, representing the efforts of several generations of German scholars. The exhaustive references to ancient literary sources included in most articles remain one of the key features of the RE—in this respect it has aged very well. However, the RE for the most part lacks the thematic and conceptual articles that are common in more recent reference works. The length and detail of many articles make it unwieldy for ready reference—in fact, several of the “articles” on major figures amount to independent monographs, and some have been published separately as such. It is a complicated work: the RE was published in two series A-Q, and R-Z, as well as a separate series of supplements. Volumes often include a section of Nachträge with corrections and additions to earlier volumes. The supplementary volumes also contain revisions, as well as new articles. Some major articles, e.g. Jacoby on Herodotus, appear in the supplements and are not in alphabetical sequence.


Effective use of the RE requires an index. These indices list RE entries in alphabetical sequence indicating where in the main series, supplements, and Nachträge information on the subject appears. Erler also includes an index of authors, and, on the CD-Roms, a subject index.


A more manageable condensation and revision of the RE. It has now largely been superseded by der Neue Pauly, but remains a handy reference work. Due to its frequent references to the unabridged RE, it can serve as a guide to the larger work.

Der Neue Pauly


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**BNP**


While the *Neue Pauly* is not intended as a replacement for the *Alte Pauly*, it is the largest complete encyclopedia of antiquity published since World War II. And the translation, the *New Pauly*, is the largest such encyclopedia ever published in English. (Unfortunately, its English sometimes lacks polish.) It is divided into two parts: 15 volumes and an index on Greco-Roman antiquity, with some coverage of neighboring regions and cultures, and 6 volumes and an index on the reception of the classical tradition and the history of classical scholarship. The length of the entries vary, but they tend to be closer to the OCD than the RE; as a result there are lots of entries—even for obscure persons and places and recondite topics. (The Classical Tradition articles tend to be longer.) While all articles provide bibliographies, their form and comprehensiveness varies. The bibliographies are decidedly, if understandably, “Eurocentric,” though an attempt was made to include more English works in the translation. The *New Pauly* is complemented by a series of supplements which now include: *Chronologies of the Ancient World: Names, Dates and Dynasties*, *Dictionary of Greek and Latin Authors and Texts*, *Historical Atlas of the Ancient World*, and *Reception of Myth and Mythology*. The entire encyclopedia, is available through Brill Online.

**The Oxford Classical Dictionary and Related Works**

**OCD**


This is the best one-volume reference work for the study of ancient Greece and Rome—both as a reliable source for finding facts and a place to begin more in-depth research. The judiciously selected bibliographies that conclude almost all entries are especially valuable, though the extent to which they were updated for the 4th edition varies. No illustrations or maps are included. The OCD has been the basis of a number of subsequent smaller reference works from Oxford that you may encounter—these provide little if any new material and can safely be passed over if you have access to the OCD. Despite some of the editors’ claims, the OCD is largely not written for a layperson—entries typically presuppose a great deal of background knowledge; indeed, this is one of the reasons such a concise “dictionary” can be so useful to scholars.

Two recent encyclopedias were explicitly developed with the strengths and limitations of the third edition of the OCD in mind. They aim more squarely at an audience of general readers (and undergraduates). Nevertheless, they are works that even a professional scholar can consult on occasion with profit.

**CDCC**
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Not intended as a competitor to the OCD, this work aims for accessibility and increased attention “to social, economic, and cultural features.” It even has a list of articles for which there is no equivalent in the OCD (pp. xxxii-xxxiv) such as “manure,” “New Testament,” and “riots,” as well as a helpful classified list of headwords. It includes a substantial number of maps, tables, and illustrations, an area where the OCD is lacking. Most articles have very brief bibliographies.

OEAGR
http://www.oxford-greecerome.com/
While it runs to seven volumes, the OEAGR comprises fewer total words than the outstandingly dense OCD. According to the editor, the “OCD contains about 1.7 million words in more than sixty-two hundred articles, OEAGR about 1.5 million words in more than eleven hundred articles.” While it has fewer entries, they tend to be longer and provide more in-depth overviews that presuppose less background knowledge than the OCD. The concern is more with what aspects of classical antiquity “mean” and less on the compilation of sources and facts. There is also some coverage of the history of reception and of classical scholarship. It is largely accessible to the general reader and the undergraduate, but many of the articles are of interest to a more experienced researcher seeking an overview of a topic, as well. Full bibliographies are included, as is a 73-page chronology.

EAH
A major new encyclopedia covering the history of the ancient Mediterranean and the Near East from the late Bronze age to the 7th Century A.D including the Ancient Near East, Pharaonic Egypt, and Jewish History as well as the Classical World. Its scope is the broadest of all encyclopedic works here considered. Over five thousand entries by two thousand contributors and cover all aspects of ancient history, including intellectual and cultural history, though literature receives less overall attention than in other reference works. The electronic version of the Encyclopedia will be continuously updated and expanded. All articles include fairly extensive bibliographies and are often illustrated.

Other Encyclopedias

Often referred to as the Artemis Lexikon, it remains a useful, larger-scale, though now somewhat dated complement to the OCD, independent of the Pauly-Wissowa tradition. The last volume includes useful, though far from comprehensive, lists of ancient portraits, manuscripts, papyri, and excavations. Still worth checking as an alternative to the New Pauly.

A convenient one-volume encyclopedia, not as in-depth as the OCD and with minimal bibliography. However it has a useful series of appendices with chronologies, genealogies, tables of weights and measures, and other miscellaneous information.
Daremberg-Saglio (Dar.-Sag.)
http://dagr.univ-tlse2.fr/sdx/dagr/index.xsp
The level of detail with which this work treats Realia, the material culture of Greco-Roman Antiquity, has not been surpassed. It is strictly an encyclopedia of antiquities, both material, social, and abstract: there are no entries on people or places, in contrast with the approach of the roughly contemporaneous RE. Like the RE, references to literary sources are usually close-to-comprehensive. It is illustrated throughout by over 7,000 engravings. While reflecting the scholarship of the late Nineteenth century, it remains the most comprehensive reference work for the material culture of classical antiquity.

Enciclopedia Classica. 11 vols. Torino: Società editrice internazionale, 1957–.
A major Italian classical encyclopedia that remains incomplete—less than half of the projected volumes have been published, and no new volume has appeared since. It is organized topically, rather than in an A to Z sequence, hence the published parts are often complete in themselves.

The closest French equivalent to the OCD or Metzler Lexikon. Its scope, however, includes the ancient Near East, Egypt, and Europe as well as the ancient Greek and Roman worlds.

Intended for the general reader, scholars will prefer the OCD under most circumstances.

II. Other General Works and Collections

ANRW
Originating as a Festschrift for Joseph Vogt, this project mushroomed into a massive (over five dozen volumes) collection of survey articles on all aspects of Roman Antiquity, both Greek and Latin. Articles may be in German, French, English, or Italian. It consists of three parts, though no volumes in the final part, on late antiquity, have yet appeared. In fact no new volumes have been published since the late 90s, though a number are still listed as in preparation. The first two parts deal with the Republic (4 volumes) and the Empire (60 volumes). Each of these parts are further divided into the following sections: 1. Political History; 2. Law; 3. Religion; 4. Language and Literature; 5. Philosophy and the Sciences; 6. The Arts. Tables of contents for each volume are available online from the Institute for the Classical Tradition at Boston University, and an index is available from the University of Kentucky: http://www.cs.uky.edu/~raphael/scaife/anrw.html.

This well-constructed guide contains a series of synoptic essays and an A to Z encyclopedia. It covers the Mediterranean world from 250 to 800 A.D., including early Islam and its expansion. Church History and Early Christianity is covered less extensively, due to the ready availability of other reference works in those areas.
Reference Sources for Classical Studies

Translated by Catherine Porter. Harvard University Press Reference Library.
A translation of *Savoir Grec: Dictionnaire Critique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1996), consisting of thematically arranged essays that provide an overview of all aspects of Greek thought.

An encyclopedia of the reception of the classical tradition written by an international team of prominent scholars. Makes for some very interesting reading.

Consisting of 97 in-depth topical essays, many by distinguished scholars; this collection provides extended, introductory overviews of aspects of Classical Civilization. The quality and approach of each essay varies, but for the most part, they can be recommended for someone seeking for something more than an encyclopedia article, but less than a monograph, on a particular topic. A detailed index is included.

*Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft.* Nordlingen, Munich: C.H. Beck, 1885–.
A venerable series of comprehensive *Handbücher* founded by Iwan von Müller. The first edition was published from 1885-91. It covers all aspects of the ancient Greek and Roman World. After 1920 coverage was expanded to include the Ancient Near East as well. Many of the older volumes have been supplanted, but some remain very useful. The subdivision of the series into Abteilungen, Banden, and Teilen can be a bit confusing. The broadest divisions, the Abteilungen, cover the following areas: I. Introductory and Ancillary Disciplines; II. Greek and Latin Grammar; Rhetoric; III. Ancient Near Eastern, Greek, and Roman History; IV. Greek Political Science, Greek and Roman Military Affairs; V. History of Philosophy, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Religion; VI. Archaeology; VII. History of Greek Literature; VIII. History of Roman Literature; IX. History of Medieval Latin Literature; X. Legal History; XI. Byzantine Studies. Individual volumes are generally cataloged separately and treated as independent works, though they are usually shelved together.

Though focusing on the history of Christianity through the sixth-century, it includes a great deal of information on all aspects of Greco-Roman antiquity, particularly for the Hellenistic and later periods. After sixty years, REAC is still in progress: volume 23 (through “Manes”) was completed in 2010.

III. Companions and Handbooks

The past fifteen years or so have seen the publication of a profusion of companions on classical topics from an increasing number of scholarly publishers. While this may in fact be a case of too much of a good thing, companions do provide an easy way to get an overview and sense of the *status quaestionis* in the area covered. One advantage over most traditional reference works is that they often include discussion of unsettled issues and debates on their subjects.
The major series of companions in English are
Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World some available in: http://www.blackwellreference.com
Brill Companions in Classical Studies
http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/brills_companions_in_classical_studies_online_i
Cambridge Companions to Literature and Classics: available online http://cco.cambridge.org/
Oxford Handbooks

Some other series to note:
Approaching the Ancient World (Routledge)
Aspects of Greek and Roman Life (Thames and Hudson, Cornell University Press)
Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World (Wiley-Blackwell)
Classical Foundations (Routledge)
Einführungen Altertumswissenschaften (WBG)
Enzyklopädie der griechisch-römischen Antike (Oldenbourg Verlag)

IV. General Introductions and Overviews

Provides a concise, authoritative overview of ancient Greek philology, history, and archaeology, including ancillary disciplines such as papyrology. Textual transmission and the history of the discipline receive exemplary coverage, as does the literature and history of the Byzantine world.


On the whole, a very useful overview with significant attention devoted to the material remains and culture of antiquity, though the quality and scope of individual contributions varies.


The Latin equivalent of Ameling and Nesselrath, which together are intended to replace Gerke and Norden’s Einleitung (see below). Its scope includes Medieval and Neo-Latin.

Extensive annotated listing of Classical reference sources. Reference literature is construed broadly, and Jenkins includes sections on journals, internet resources, collections of primary sources in translations, and single-author lexicons and bibliographies. While the scholarly sources one would expect are included, so are many
popular and idiosyncratic publications—usually noted as such. It’s a very useful book, though already slightly dated.

The only book in English to provide a broad overview of research areas and methods in classical studies and its “ancillary disciplines.”

Some older books that remain useful:

Largely replaced by Graf and Ameling’s and Nesselrath’s *Einleitungen*. Some noteworthy monographs began their life as sections of Gercke-Norden, including Wilamowitz’s *History of Classical Scholarship*, Maas’s *Textual Criticism*, and Ehrenberg’s *The Greek State*.

While outdated, both Sandys and Whibley include chapters on some topics, e.g. fauna and flora, that have not been covered with the same detail in more recent reference works.

V. History

Methodological Works

A translation of the 6th edition of Bengtson’s *Einführung in die alte Geschichte*, first published in 1949. This book is reaching the end of its useful life, but its account of the history of the field and its overview of older, mainly German, bibliography are still of interest.


With chapters on literature by Emilio Gabba, epigraphy by Fergus Millar, archaeology by Anthony Snodgrass, and numismatics by Michael Crawford, this work provides an excellent account of the use of sources in the study of ancient history.

A theoretically informed and yet conversational overview of the study of Graeco-Roman history. It emphasizes the distance between our experience of the ancient sources (as ‘documents’) and the role of those sources in antiquity (as ‘monuments’.)


**Major Histories**

**CAH**


The first volume of CAH was published in 1923, and revised volumes have appeared regularly since the end of the Second World War. Currently, all volumes are either in their second or third edition. It covers the history of the Mediterranean area and the Near East from prehistory to 600 A.D. The CAH is the most comprehensive history of the ancient Western world, and includes extensive bibliographies and illustrations.


These and other Cambridge Histories are available online: [http://histories.cambridge.org](http://histories.cambridge.org)


**Key Ancient History Book Series**

*Blackwell History of the Ancient World*

*Edinburgh History of Ancient Rome*

*Edinburgh History of the Greeks*

*Fontana History of the Ancient World* (Published by Harvard University Press in the U.S.)

*Routledge History of the Ancient World*

**VI. Literature**

**General**


While no longer an accurate guide to the texts included in the TLG, this remains a very useful list of ancient Greek writers (almost 3200 of them) and their works (more than 9400 of them), each with a citation of the
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dition that was chosen by the APA Advisory Committee as of the late 80’s. The current TLG cannon is online (http://www.tlg.uci.edu/canon), but it lacks some of the details of the print edition.

Most useful for its coverage of post-classical Greek and Latin writers.

In-depth essays on major classical and early Christian authors and genres. Less important authors are treated in general collective essays, such as “Annalisti,” and “Epici latini minori.” All articles include extensive bibliographies.

Dihle, Albrecht. *Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire: From Augustus to Justinian.*
Especially useful for its coverage of Empire and late-antique Greek authors, areas that are far from the center of attention in most other histories of Greek literature.

CHCL

A revision of Sir Paul Harvey’s *Companion* first published in 1937. While not geared towards specialists and without references and bibliography, it can be useful for it succinct explanations of literary matters.

CHLC

In-depth, critical essays on major ancient authors arranged chronologically

Entries are by title of work, rather than author, with indexes arranging titles by author and genre.


Greek
A concise history focusing on the archaic and classical periods.

Though now largely supplanted in English by the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, this translation of *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (Bern: Francke, 1966) remains useful. Many minor authors are omitted, and literature after the Hellenistic period is given very cursory coverage. The focus is very much on the archaic and classical periods.

While outdated in most respects, Rose’s *Handbook* remains a useful source for basic biographical and historical information, though little space is devoted to minor authors.


**Schmid-Stählin**

Also cited as Christ-Schmind-Stählin, this remains most comprehensive history of Greek literature. Full details are provided for minor authors, though major authors receive additional essays. It is now being replaced by the *Handbuch der Griechischen Literatur der Antike*, edited by Bernhard Zimmermann. The first volume appeared in 2011.


**Latin**


An overview of ancient Roman literature that emphasizes the circulation, transmission, and reception of literary texts in a broader social context.


“Schanz-Hosius,” old, but still not completely replaced by Herzog-Schmidt.

**Herzog-Schmidt**  
*Handbuch der lateinischen Literature der Antike*, a subdivision of the *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaften* (Abteilungen 8), that will eventually replace Shanz-Hosius. The following volumes have been published so far:  


**Single-author Encyclopedias**  
While these multivolume encyclopedias each concentrate on the work of a single ancient author, they all include plenty of material on more general aspects of classical antiquity and its reception.


**VII. Mythology and Religion**


The most recent manifestation of Rose’s often revised and reprinted *Handbook of Greek Mythology*, now almost completely rewritten. Its lack of references to secondary literature is a limitation.


Integrated topical presentation of ancient Mediterranean religions.

**LIMC**


Catalogs and details sources for the representation of mythological figures in both literature and art. Individual articles may be in German, Italian, French, or English. Each volume consists of two parts: text (including line drawings) and plates. While focused on the iconographic aspects of myth, the extensive reference and discussion of other evidence makes this an essential reference for serious work on classical mythology in all its manifestations. Extensive references to secondary literature, as well as primary sources are provided, supplemented by a number of online databases (LIMCicon, LIMCbiblio, and LIMCabrev) at [http://www.limc-france.fr](http://www.limc-france.fr).


Still the most comprehensive encyclopedia of Classical Mythology. It’s extensive references to primary sources, as they were known at the time remain useful, though the interpretations are now only of historical interest.

**ThesCRA**


A sequel to the LIMC, this work catalogs ancient cults and rituals, “the substantial aspects of Greek, Roman, and Etruscan religion, apart from any assessment of the purely spiritual or philosophical.” It is divided into a “Level of Dynamic Elements, of activities,” (vols. 1 to 3) and a “Level of Static Elements” (vol. 4-8). Entries may be written in English, Italian, German, or French, and catalog and explicate relevant literary, epigraphic, archaeological iconographic sources—often with illustrations. The final volume is an index of museums, collections, and sites.

**Appendix: Books on Research**


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http://guides.library.yale.edu/classics