



# The Oxford Classical Dictionary

*From Oxford University Press*

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## The Oxford Classical Dictionary From Oxford University Press

For almost half a century, the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* has been the unrivaled one-volume reference work on the Greco-Roman world. Whether one is interested in literature or art, philosophy or law, mythology or science, intimate details of daily life or broad cultural and historical trends, the *OCD* is the first place to turn for clear, authoritative information on ancient culture.

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**law and philosophy** - from biographies of lawgivers and lawyers to legal terms and procedures, from major and minor philosophers to philosophical schools,

terms, and concepts

**science and geography** - scientists and scientific theory and practice, doctors and medicine, climate and landscape, natural disasters, regions and islands, cities and settlements, communications

**languages, literature, art, and architecture** - languages and dialects, writers and literary terms and genres, orators and rhetorical theory and practice, drama and performance, art, painters and sculptors, architects, buildings and materials

**archaeology and historical writing** - amphorae and pottery, shipwrecks and cemeteries, historians, and Greek and Roman historiography

**military history** - generals, arms and armour, famous battles, attitudes to warfare

**social history, sex, and gender** - women and the family, kinship, peasants and slaves, attitudes to sexuality

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## Editorial Review

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Over a quarter of a century has elapsed since the last revision to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, longer even than the 21 years between the first and second editions. As noted in the introduction to the current edition, those years have seen a phenomenal growth in classical scholarship, indeed, in all the humanistic disciplines, and an awakening of interest in new theories and subjects long ignored. Evidence of these changes can be seen in the titles of some of the approximately 800 new articles: *Homosexuality*, *Women in Philosophy*, *Abortion*, *Class Struggle*, and *Literary Theory and Classical Languages*. Most articles show signs of revision and reworking, often extensive. Bibliographies have been updated as well, even in those articles (mostly short ones) reprinted without change. The editors have also made an effort to make the work more accessible to the layperson. Many of the new articles are thematic articles of general interest: *Earthquakes*; *Shipwrecks*, *Ancient*; and *Fishing*, for example. Contributors have been instructed to limit explanations that require knowledge of Greek or Latin, and although a number do appear, they are generally related to very specific details and do not compromise the comprehension of the articles in which they are found. As with the second edition, there is no general index, but there are rather generous cross-references as well as asterisks next to terms for which a separate article exists.

Users of the previous editions will be happy to know that the new edition continues to function well as a tool for identification and for the location of much of what factual information is known of the ancient world. Many of the new articles are for specific individuals, places, or things, from *Acanthus* (a Greek colony in Chalcidice) to *Zeuxis Philathes* (a Greek physician of the Augustan age). The level of scholarship remains uncompromising. Bibliographies, for example, consistently list relevant primary texts and often include non-English secondary sources. Certain discussions may not be clear to every reader, as in the account under *Calender, Roman* of how the 10-month calendar acquired extra months, which omits any explanation of how Quintilus came to be July. An effort has been made in this edition to list persons under family name and under linguistically correct forms even when other forms may be more familiar, so that Julius Caesar is under *Iulius Caesar*, *Gaius* and Scipio Africanus under *Cornelius Scipio Africanus (the elder)*, *Publius*, though adequate cross-references exist. Occasionally, an effort to move the discussion of a specific term to a more general article has produced a blind reference; the reader, for example, is told under *effatus* to see *Augures*, but in that article the term *effatus* is not mentioned.

Still, despite occasional difficulties, this is a work that makes a fascinating world of learning accessible to a broad audience. The editor, in thanking the contributors for their generosity, notes that "the pressures of university life are now in the direction of selfish productivity at the level of pure research." This work, though thoroughly up to date, does seem like the product of another era, when the gap between what scholars wrote and the rest of us read was less stark. It should continue to be the single most heavily used book on classical studies in the reference collections of academic libraries, and it deserves a place in all but the smallest public libraries as well as in high-school libraries where classical studies are at all a part of the curriculum.

## Review

`Review from previous edition this magnificent book'

Boris Johnson, Daily Telegraph

`a classic...a highly readable and browseable delight...should be in every reference collection'

B. Juhl, Choice

`a delight for anyone with any curiosity about the roots of our Western culture...a browser's paradise, and I would think a researcher's quick rescuer'  
Arthur Miller, London Review of Books

`the third edition of The Oxford Classical Dictionary should be saluted'  
Nigel Spivey, Guardian

`a remarkable feat...Simon Hornblower and Tony Spawforth deserve a round of applause for the spread, exactness and range of this massive overhaul'  
Robin Lane Fox, Observer

`offers not only that breakfast for the mind we keep hearing about, but lunch, tea, dinner, supper and non-stop snacks...offers a cornucopia of accurate and succinct knowledge that would be hard to equal'  
Peter Green, Washington Times

`the ultimate useful book'  
Peter Jones, Sunday Telegraph

`an astonishing book'  
Robert Beaumont, Yorkshire Evening Press

`the book's substance speaks for itself: 364 distinguished scholars contribute scrupulously sourced intellectual meat of a texture that Socrates himself would savour'  
Sunday Times

`For classical scholars, the Oxford Classical Dictionary is what Wisden is for cricket fans: the one indispensable reference book...this book is more than a crossword-filler's vade mecum. In the sense of our collective intellectual domestication, it is a household object.'  
The Week

About the Author

Simon Hornblower is Professor of Classics and Ancient History, University College London. He is the author and editor of many books (see books by the same author). Antony Spawforth is Professor of Ancient History, University of Newcastle upon Tyne. He is also a well-known presenter of television programmes on archaeological and classical subjects in the BBC series 'Ancient Voices'. He has written and edited many books (see books by the same author).

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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Spent a free time to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your current free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book might be option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the e-book untitled The Oxford Classical Dictionary can be good book to

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**James Bouchard:**

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