

# *basic reference works for the Classical world: a brief guide*

Dr Charlie Weiss (cw322@cam.ac.uk)

- the *Cambridge Ancient History* second edition (many volumes) is authoritative, relatively concise and for most of us prohibitively expensive (hardback or online paywall)
- the *CAH* first edition remains useful; volumes can be found relatively easily second-hand and there is a link to (free) .pdfs on my website ([www.charlieslanguagepage.com](http://www.charlieslanguagepage.com))
- *A History of Greece* by Bury & Meiggs remains the best textbook on the topic (*very cheap used*)
- *A History of Rome* by Cary & Scullard remains the best textbook on the topic (*very cheap used*)

**WARNING: avoid “new” .pdf-based copies of these books and look for real second-hand copies**

- the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (now 4<sup>th</sup> ed.) is also authoritative (hardback or online paywall); earlier editions remain useful (*Who’s who in the Classical world* and the *Oxford companion to Classical literature* are also useful if you are completely new to the subject)
- the original *OCD* was *Lemprière’s Classical Dictionary*: this remains a treasure and can be found *very cheaply used* but apparently not online—**same WARNING above applies here**
- Anthon’s *Smith* is similar in nature and on my website
- the Loeb Classical Library, especially recently, offers excellent editions and translations of almost all Classical authors (hardback or online paywall)
- many out-of-copyright Loeb’s in .pdf (free) can be found at [ryanfb.github.io/loebolus](http://ryanfb.github.io/loebolus)
- the Perseus project features most Classical authors in the original and translation ([perseus.tufts.edu](http://perseus.tufts.edu)) and many works of reference (free)
- the Oxford World’s Classics and (recent) Penguin editions of Classical authors are usually excellent, with good introductions, notes and bibliographies (inexpensive)
- the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* is authoritative but aging
- *Literature in the Greek & Roman Worlds* (ed. Taplin) is newer but casual
- the *Cambridge Companions* series is interesting but of variable quality in usefulness
- *Pierre Grimal’s Dictionary of Classical Mythology* is indispensable (worth buying)