

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF ROMAN STUDIES

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RATIONALE

Oxford's recent series of handbooks offers an interesting opportunity for designing a book of orientation about 'Roman studies'. We see the project as an experiment in looking forwards and backwards at the same time. Looking back: there is a continuous need to recuperate and reorganize the bodies of evidence and forms of knowledge that converge to create the area study that we call 'Ancient Rome'. Looking forward: the very title of this proposal is not something traditional or to be taken for granted. 'Roman studies' exist more as an ideal than as a practice. The existing works that could be our competitors are in fact either literary or historical or art-historical or about a 'civilization'. Interaction between the various fields and specializations is not sufficient; students and even scholars are in a serious danger of not even realizing the exciting possibilities of crossing over from literature to epigraphy, from art to philosophy, from papyrology to economic history, and of discovering new and exciting links. Our project has a claim to be a contribution towards **establishing** a field and a scholarly practice as well as a **description** of a field and existing scholarly practice.

Orientation, therefore, is our aim. A collection of some fifty to sixty short essays will map and synthesize the main aspects of Roman culture and history plus the main tools, ideas, and approaches that help to reconstruct and reimagine the Roman world. The book will provide a mix of suggestive ideas and updated reliable information, and most often this will all happen within the same essay. The ideal reader can be defined on three compatible levels as (i) graduate students looking for an attractive, engaging and updated access to Roman studies (ii) teachers and especially (as is frequently the case in today's academia and world of letters) graduate students, scholars and lovers of other, neighboring areas, who look for comparisons, cross-references, kicks in the field of Roman studies (e.g. people interested in history, cultural studies, art and literature of other periods), and (iii) Classicists who need to strengthen their sense of the overall picture and be able to create new links across the area study (i.e., everyone including ourselves). Our volume will have debates and issues, developments and trends. The point is to summarize the state of play, react to the state of the question, and so further debate.

LENGTH AND SCHEDULE

6,000 words per chapter (including references)

Deadline for final submissions: October 31, 2006

Publication planned for spring 2008 (jointly with *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies*)

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