

Editors' Foreword

Since 1978, the series *Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte* (Oldenbourg Outline of History) has served both students and teachers as an important means of orientation, delivering what its title promises: an outline, a plan providing insights from a bird's-eye view which would be difficult to gain from other perspectives.

The series has held fast to its main purpose since its inception. In a proven three-part structure, each volume first provides an introduction to the given historic subject. The second part is devoted to a thorough survey of the research, providing newcomers with the given area an overview of current and past debates. Equally, trained historians and newcomers are increasingly challenged to keep up to date on the major ramifications of a research topic, in view of the characteristic complexity, international scope, and temporal depth of such discussions. At this point the series is a crucial aid – and this is the key feature which significantly distinguishes it from other publications of its kind. Each volume is rounded up by a third part which offers an extensive bibliography.

In the course of its own history, the *Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte* series has responded to the changes in research, debate, and study of history. It has gradually expanded to include new subject areas. The series overall is no longer exclusively devoted to a survey starting in Greek and Roman antiquity, scrutinizing the European Middle Ages at length, then arriving in the present, broadly understood as the modern era. While this chronological tour of German and European history remains fundamental for an orientation in relation to historic events, its scope is increasingly being broadened by volumes on special themes and non-European subjects. Thus the series documents the substantive changes that are continuously taking place in the study of history.

The *Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte* series presents these topics to students who want to explore not only the substance, but also the research history of a complex field. At the same time, they are intended to support teachers in their endeavours to communicate such topics in lectures and seminars. Nevertheless, the primary objective remains accurately to portray past times, the more recent as well as the more remote, not simply by representing them as

events and structures, but by showing that the scholarly treatment of them is a part of their history.

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