December 2000

From the Reference Desk-Reviews of Reference Titles

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Recommended Citation

Gilson, Tom (2000) "From the Reference Desk-Reviews of Reference Titles," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 12: Iss. 6, Article 25.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3111>

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Profiles Encouraged

Name: Adrian W. Alexander (I always include the middle initial to distinguish me from all the other Adrian Alexanders out there).

Position: Executive Director, Big 12 Plus Libraries Consortium
<<http://www.big12plus.org>>

Along with a program officer, I plan and coordinate a wide variety of cooperative programs for this group of 30 research libraries in 15 states. My office is in the Linda Hall Library (<http://www.lindahall.org>), which is one of the most unique libraries in the country, not to mention one of the loveliest. We basically rent office space and admin support from Linda Hall and they handle our financial affairs as well, although my program officer and I are actually PAID through other member libraries.

Born: July 23, 1950; Waxahachie, Texas.

Current Residence: Overland Park, Kansas

Education: MLS, University of North Texas; BA (History), Texas Tech University.

Job Experience: Hired as first executive director of Big 12 Plus in March 1998; previously spent 13 years in the serials vendor world with Faxon and Swets (very briefly). Worked in academic libraries for five years as a reference librarian and in admin services before moving to the "dark" side as a serials vendor (I'm still confused about why librarians call it the "dark" side; the glare was pretty intense when I was there!).

Proudest accomplishments: Professional — Member of UCLA Senior Fellows Class of 1999.

Personal: Recently appeared in the "world premiere" of a new play by a local playwright/director/actor who also happens to be my acting coach (I was cast without an audition).

First job: My very first paying job ever was at the age of 14 when I worked summers for my godfather, who owned an extermination company. I got to crawl under houses and dig trenches around the foundation so we could spray for termites. This job convinced me early of the importance of a good education. My first "professional" job after college (but pre-library school) was as an investigator for the old U.S. Civil Service Commission; I did background investigations on government employees and government contractors who needed security clearances.

Biggest recent surprise: Getting sunburned in sunny 70+ degree weather at St. Andrews, Scotland while watching the British Open (my 50th birthday present); that's never happened to me in Scotland before!

Favorite pastimes: Theatre (spectator & participant), golf (spectator & participant), good food & wine, reading, traveling, collecting single malt whiskies.

Literary tastes: I do believe that good food and good books go together. I tend to read mostly historical fiction (favorite author: Dorothy Dunnett), southern fiction (Ellen Gilchrist), plays, and European history (mostly British now, formerly Russian).

Seven Years from Now: I'd like to retire early and spend my time acting and traveling, although not at the same time, with at least a weekly round of golf thrown in for good measure.

Had I but world enough and time... Shouldn't that read "money enough and time?" Either way, I would like to visit every continent on the planet before the hole in the ozone layer gets too big.

From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (College of Charleston)
<gilsont@cofc.edu>

More than half way toward completion, Gale Group's *Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia* (1999 – 2001, 078763736X, \$995) is emerging as a significant contribution to the reference literature. Projected to be 16 volumes (including the index) with more than 8,000 entries, this set promises to be a landmark in women's biography. International in scope, *Women in World History* offers a serious but accessible treatment of women in all walks of life and helps redress the lack of coverage of women in other biographical works. In short, there is nothing else like it in this important area of biography.

Ranging from 3100 BCE up through modern times, this encyclopedia includes biographies of queens, actresses, athletes, politicians, writers, soldiers, diplomats, artists as well as, women in other diverse fields. The length of each entry varies from short personal profiles to a full-fledged bio including a multi-page narrative, pictures, a list of reference sources and a byline. There is also an interesting use of sidebars for entries to women related in some way to the main subject being discussed. Fortunately, a sometimes confusing system of directional arrows, pointing to the related entries, is augmented by cross-referencing within the overall alphabetically arrangement. Another fascinating and helpful feature is the genealogical chart section in volume 1. Grouped by country, these charts identify ruling families and display the name of the women in bold. A total of 90 such charts are included. In addition, the set is thoroughly cross-referenced by name, name variant and title and there are plans for occupational, geographical and master indexes.

Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia represents 9 years of collective work. The commitment and level of research that has gone into this set is obvious. Editors **Anne Commire** and **Deborah Klezmer**, along with more than 300 contributors, are providing an exceptional reference work that will find a place in most libraries. Naturally, there will be omissions. The editors admit that they wanted to include more women writers but were limited by the sheer number of worthy possibilities. But knowing Gale Group, you can count on supplements being published as long as there is demand. Completed volumes can be purchased individually. Check out *Books in Print* or Amazon for details.

It would be hard to overestimate the influence of religious practice on human history and a recent **Fitzroy Dearborn** title, the *Encyclopedia of Monasticism* (2000, 1579580904, \$295), gives added proof of that influence. The *Encyclopedia* covers 45 countries and regions with monastic traditions that have existed over the centuries and contributed to the spiritual and social needs of people worldwide.

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community. The importance will only increase as scholars, researchers, and end-users look for easier, faster access to the information they seek when they need it—from different publishers and via different interfaces and services.

ATG: Tell us about yourselves. What do you do for fun?

SI: For fun? This industry is a great place to work, the people are intelligent and focused on building solutions that work for their customers, whether they are library customers or publishers, so I still get a kick out of the conferences, shows and meetings I go to.

However with a young family and an extensive set of neglected hobbies such as "potholing" [spelunking], climbing, and 4-wheel drive off-roading, I really need to get out in the hills a little more.

This two-volume set offers five types of articles including those on broad themes and perspectives, individual topics, geographic locations, important individuals and those devoted specifically to monastic orders. Coverage runs the gamut from St. Benedict to the current Dalai Lama and from the Desert Fathers to Buddhism in the United States. There are also articles on women monastics, as well as comparative articles on topics like asceticism, meditation, clothing, food, gender, prayer and sexuality. Additional articles cover practices like the mandala and recent changes to monasticism in countries like Sri Lanka.

But the *Encyclopedia of Monasticism* has limits. The overwhelming emphasis is on the Buddhist and Christian monastic traditions. It provides only passing mention of Hindu, Jain, Daoist and Islamic monastic life. However, the complexities and variations within the Buddhist and Christian traditions are fully explored with serious, scholarly attention. The articles are thoroughly researched and all have individual bibliographies. There is also liberal use of "see also" references linking related articles and a thematic outline of entries that gives a sense of scope and comprehensiveness. A glossary and strong general index round out the set. Both volumes are illustrated with black and white photos, but there are also sections of color photos in each volume that demonstrate the beauty and grandeur of monastic building and architecture.

This is a first class production that both scholars and informed lay readers will find useful. Academic and large public libraries will want to add the *Encyclopedia of Monasticism* to their collections.

Compendium lovers and factoid fanatics rejoice. A highly respected ready reference classic has just gone global. H.W. Wilson has published *Famous First Facts International Edition* by Steven Anzovin and Jane Podell, and it is a worthy companion to the

5th ed. of the original *Famous First Facts*. Organized in much the same way, *Famous First Facts International Edition* lists main subject categories alphabetically, with additional subcategories included when necessary. Within each category and subcategory, arrangement of entries is chronological. A total of 5000 entries vary from listing the first wine cooler described by **Blasius Villafranca** in his *Methodus Refrigerandi* circa 1550, to mention of the first English translation of the Bible sponsored by John Wycliffe in 1382. Recent events and discoveries get their fair share of attention too. According to authors Anzovin and Podell, on March 15, 1999, Maurice Ashley became the first black chess player to become a grandmaster and, while dating to approximately 115,000 BCE, the first human footprint was found in 1995 near Cape Town in South Africa.

Famous First Facts International Edition is full of these fascinating tidbits. While it is an information treasure chest that will help reference librarians answer questions, it is also fun to read. Open to almost any page and you may find yourself engrossed in both the notable and the arcane. Access to all this information is provided by 5 indexes. First there is a subject index, then one by year, another by date, a fourth by personal name and finally a geographical index. References are to entry number in each of the indexes.

Public libraries will find *Famous First Facts International Edition* indispensable while academic libraries, especially those predominantly serving undergraduates, will find it a valuable and useful addition.

There seems to be a blossoming of interest in things medieval. Although centuries separate us from that world, we continually learn new things about it and after browsing through Garland's *Medieval Archaeology: An Encyclopedia* (2001, 0815312865, \$135) you can understand why. Medieval studies are informed by this active and scholarly pursuit, and this encyclopedia reflects its expanding development. Editor **Pam J. Crabtree**, along with 150 contributors, offer essays that range from country surveys to those articles that discuss individual cultures and specific archaeological sites. There are also articles that show what archaeology can teach regarding things like coinage, shipbuilding, burial practices, ceramics, mills and milling technology, animal husbandry and castle building.

The writing is factual and informative and the text is adequately illustrated with photos, maps and site drawings. The articles are arranged alphabetically and there are additional organizing aids including a list of site entries by country, a listing that groups articles by broad subjects and a general index.

However, there are a couple of

problems. The bibliographies seem a bit uneven. A number of articles have a fairly extensive list of references while others have few or none. Obviously, this reflects the amount and level of scholarship on individual topics but one would expect more than 5 listings for the article covering the impact of the collapsing Roman Empire. And, while editor Crabtree notes in her introduction that the Web is an important source for information about new discoveries, I failed to notice any sites listed in the bibliographies.

Nonetheless, *Medieval Archaeology: An Encyclopedia* gathers valuable information from disparate sources and combines them in a useful single volume. Both students and lay readers interested in medieval studies will find it a valuable resource. It is a worthy first edition of a book that could see future versions as this field continues to develop. Academic libraries in particular will find it a helpful addition to their reference collections.

Subject Encyclopedias: User Guide, Review Citations, and Keyword Index (1999, 1573561991, \$135) is a title that some librarians may have missed. As any reference librarian knows, subject encyclopedias make up an essential component of a reference collection. Often reference librarians rely on knowledge of their collections to lead patrons to these resources. With this two-volume set they now have a formal key to the subject content of many of their library's better subject encyclopedias, as well as a tool for selecting additional, useful titles.

This Oryx Press reference acts as a bibliography of 1129 subject encyclopedias, as well as an index to 98 of these titles, selected "because they are especially well suited to helping library users begin their research." It is divided into two parts. Part I arranges the titles by partial Library of Congress Classification number and provides "a bibliographic citation, as well as citations to reviews and awards, numerical review average, OCLC holdings, and a rating." The reviews come from standard library publications including *Choice*, *Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *ARBA*, *RQ* and 4 others. The review average compiled by author Allan N. Mirwis is based on a five-point scale ranging from 1, reflecting a "not recommended", to a 5, reflecting an "outstanding" title. Each title is also assigned an additional rating by Mirwis that is based on the review average along with other criteria like awards and OCLC holdings. This provides a systematic method of ranking each source listed. My only reservation with Part I is that the bibliographic citations do not provide ISBN numbers, but otherwise, there is a lot of helpful information here.

Part II is the section that will be most helpful at the reference desk. It indexes 98 of the most useful subject encyclopedias including standard titles like the *Encyclopedia of Bio-*

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ethics, the *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, *Black Women in America*, *Dictionary of American History*, the *Harvard Guide to Women's Health*, the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* and many others. However, there are some serious omissions. The arts are not particularly well covered. Looking in the index for the subject "painting," there are references, but none to art encyclopedias. And with titles like Grove's *Dictionary of Art* that might have been included, this is a shortcoming.

Subject Encyclopedias... is the first title since Joe Ryan's *First Stop: The Master Index to Subject Encyclopedias* (1989, 0897743970, OP) that attempts to offer one-stop access to subject encyclopedias. Author Allan N. Mirwis deserves a lot of credit for this important and time-consuming work. However, future editions should include more than 98 titles in Part II. Still, this set is a valuable tool for reference librarians. Selectors will want to consult it for possible additions to the collections while librarians working the desk will want it close by for referral to the most appropriate encyclopedias.

Although most people in this country think they know what "human rights" means, few are familiar with the legal definitions and formal concepts that characterize the term.

ABC-CLIO's new *Human Rights in the United States: A Dictionary and Documents* (2000, 157607109X, \$175) hopes to help remedy that situation. Besides offering definitions for 240 terms, authors Rita Cantos Cartwright and H. Victor Conde also provide access to 59 official documents related to the concept of human rights.

This two-volume set looks at human rights broadly and includes terms used in international humanitarian and criminal law that apply to human rights issues. Entries cover individual concepts like collective punishment, political asylum and ethnic cleansing, as well as broad themes like pluralism, social justice and racism. In addition, there are entries for institutions like the International Criminal Court, treaties like the Convention on the Rights of Children, principles like the rule of law and procedures like due process. Each entry consists of a clear definition and an explanation of its significance that contains references to the relevant documents included in the set. This last point is important in that, besides giving commentary on the term, the significance portion of the entry links it to a primary source document. In addition, there is extensive cross-referencing among entries.

The document portion makes up more than half the set and the majority of the documents are U.N. related. This section brings home how international standards are interwoven into those held by the United States. With documents ranging from the *Universal*

Declaration of Human Rights to the *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* to the *American Conventions on Human Rights*, the law, indeed the discipline of human rights study, is given framework in this section.

Human Rights in the United States: A Dictionary and Documents is a conceptually thorough and well-organized reference. The definitions are relevant with valuable commentary and are linked to source documents and other related entries. Human rights are a growing area of study and concern. Both academic and public libraries should consider this important and timely reference for their collections.

ABC-CLIO has also added a new title to a series that has proven suitable for both reference and circulating collections. *Adolf Hitler: A Biographical Companion* (2000, 0874369657, \$55) is the sixth release in a group of titles that includes treatments of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Susan B. Anthony, Napoleon and Stalin. Written by David Nicholls, who also authored the volume on Napoleon, this book follows the same format as the others. Entries are arranged alphabetically and cover events, personalities, movements, issues and places that played a part in Hitler's life or which he impacted. Each entry contains a list of additional related articles, and many have short bibliographies. A brief section of excerpted

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documents, a chronology and an index end the book. The entries are short, clearly written and factual. However, the author does not shrink from dealing with touchy issues like the role of the Vatican or the depth of Hitler's involvement in the "final solution." Overall, *Adolf Hitler: A Biographical Companion* is an orderly and succinct work that provides easy access to a good deal of useful information.

But why a biographical reference about Adolf Hitler? There is already a cottage industry consisting of works about Hitler and Nazi Germany. Do we really need one more? Well, as the author rightly states, Hitler "created a moral trauma that will never and should never be surmounted. The nature of his barbarity ... the forces that made him possible, are still matters calling urgently for assessment and judgement." With his book, David Nicholls provides a legitimate starting point for more thorough analysis. Given its format and ease of use, students and lay readers will find it equally compelling. It merits consideration for public, high school and undergraduate collections.

After only 3 years, Oxford University Press has felt the need to update its *Oxford Dictionary of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology* (2000, 0198506732, \$65). This revised edition corrects the minor mistakes and defects of the first, as well as revising or re-writing 400 articles and adding 50 new ones. Broadly speaking, the dictionary reflects current usage in fields that attempt to "explain the behaviour of life-forms in molecular terms." Definitions include those for genes, enzymes, amino acids, proteins, reactions and even equipment. Each definition is clearly written and understandable, especially for students with some background. Abbreviations and symbols are included in the definition of a term whenever necessary and are also listed in the alphabetical arrangement with reference to the full term. The presentation is appealing with the headwords in bold type. In addition, there are useful appendices containing clarification of Greek letter symbols and references to nomenclature publications, organizations and Internet resources. Unfortunately, as in the first edition, there are no pronunciations.

The *Oxford Dictionary of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology* is a highly useful tool for undergraduates in need of clear definitions for terms uncovered in their textbooks and in other reading.

However, the changes are not that significant from the first edition and libraries owning it may not see the need to update. By my count a little over 2% of the definitions are revised or new. But at this price, an argument can be made to place the older edition in cir-

ulation while shelving the new edition in reference. Libraries needing additional, more in-depth coverage might also consider the *Concise Encyclopedia of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology* published by Walter de Gruyter (1996, 3110145359, \$99.95).

Another worthy second edition is Garland's *Encyclopedia of Human Evolution and Prehistory* (2000, 0815316968, \$175) edited by Eric Delson et al. Updating the 1988 edition, this new version maintains the same quality and expands coverage to an additional 200 topic headings in over 135 new pages of text. Even un-revised entries have updated bibliographies and "see also" references. Coverage is thorough and comprehensive including articles on topics ranging from general evolutionary concepts to specifics like time intervals, tools, dating methods, localities and sites, biographical entries,

archaeological industries and taxonomy. The second edition also has a number of new illustrations and photos, as well as a general index, a feature lacking in the first edition. The only factor in the minus column is the binding. It is a step down, being paper rather than buckram. However, I have one suggested improvement. Given the number of specialized terms used throughout the text, this book could benefit from a glossary.

But these are minor reservations. The *Encyclopedia of Human Evolution and Prehistory* deserves serious consideration. It is a top-notch background source for students, professionals and the informed general reader. More substantial than the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution* (1993, 0521323703, \$100) and with a more useful alphabetical arrangement, this reference will be of particular interest to academic and larger public libraries.

Book Reviews

Monograph Musings and Children's Critical Corner

Column Editor: **Deborah Vaughn** (College of Charleston)
<vaughnd@cofc.edu>

Number one on my list of millennium resolutions: read more books. With a new house and five pets, I often find it hard to read amidst the walls in need of painting, the cats in need of feeding, and the dog in need of walking. This year, however, I have vowed to make time to peruse more monographic publications. Just in case increased reading is also on your list of millennium resolutions, I offer you a plethora of thumbnail reviews to whet your literary appetite.

In this issue, newcomer **Kathy Sperounis** examines *Online Competitive Intelligence*. Kathy received bachelors' degrees in both History and English from the University of Tennessee in 1994. In 1997, I had the pleasure of becoming her friend and classmate at the University of South

Carolina College of Library and Information Science. Focusing on special and business libraries, Kathy created an internship at the Disney World Library. After earning her MLIS in 1999, Kathy remained in Florida where she is currently a Technical Services and Reference librarian at Warner Southern Christian College in Lake Wales.

Something new for the New Year: reviews of children's books and young adult literature. **Jennie Vaughn** joins me in examining a handful of tomes for these delightful audiences.

I welcome suggestions for book reviews from authors, publishers, and readers. I am also forever seeking individuals who would like to become ATG reviewers. Please do not hesitate to drop me an email message. Happy Millennium and Happy Reading!

Burwell, Helen. *Online Competitive Intelligence: Increase your Profits using Cyber Intelligence*. Tempe, AZ: Facts on Demand Press, 1999.
396p. ISBN 1889150088. \$25.95.

Reviewed by **Kathy Sperounis**
(Warner Southern Christian College, Lake Wales, FL) <kearnol@yahoo.com>

Want to know the wave of the future for corporations in the way of gathering information on the competition? It should come as no surprise that the latest and some of the most accurate company information can be found by using online sources. And why not?

For years we have used the world wide Web to find information, and now Helen Burwell's *Online Competitive Intelligence* tells us how to find corporate information on the Internet.

Competitive intelligence (or CI, to which
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