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From the Reference Desk

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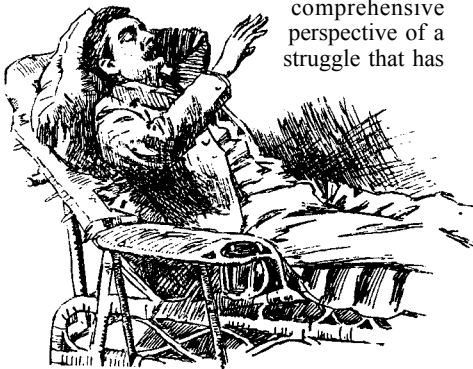
From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Given the pivotal role that the Arab-Israeli conflict occupies in world events, it is obviously deserving of a multivolume reference work that untangles its complicated history. In the recently released *Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2008, 978-1-85109-841-5, \$395) from ABC-CLIO, there is now an encyclopedia worthy of the task.

Edited by the prolific and highly regarded military historian **Spencer C. Tucker**, the first three volumes of this set boasts more than 750 entries in which the last volume consists of 168 relevant primary source documents. The articles range from biographies of influential thinkers, politicians and military men to entries that cover specific places and events as well as entries covering influential organizations, ideas and movements and military weapons and technology. Added to these, there are also a number of broader survey articles like those discussing the history of Palestine, the geography of the Middle East, water rights and resources, and important archaeological sites and projects in the region. The documents volume starts with a letter from **Lord Palmerston to Viscount Beauvale** dated June 28, 1839 stating the British desire to preserve the Ottoman Empire from partitioning while the last is an excerpt from the Program of the Palestinian Authority National Unity Government dated March 17, 2007. The articles are grounded in recent scholarship and written in a factual and even-handed fashion. Each has a bibliography containing citations from recent sources. The set also contains clear and well produced maps and is illustrated by black and white photos. In addition, there is a useful categorical index as well as a general index providing specific access to all four volumes.

It is not an exaggeration to say that an awareness of the Arab-Israeli conflict is essential to understanding the underlying context of issues ranging from terrorism to religious fanaticism to the geopolitical importance of oil. By providing a scholarly and balanced reference work on the people, issues and historic framework that defines the Arab-Israeli conflict, **Tucker** and his team of contributors have made an invaluable contribution. The topic coverage and scholarly content in these four volumes offer a thorough and comprehensive perspective of a struggle that has



helped define recent world history. The *Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* is a set that will be in high demand by both academic libraries, as well as larger public libraries.

Sandwiched in between the **First World War** and the **Great Depression**, the 1920s, or as they are often called, the Roaring Twenties, still hold fascination for many. Feeding this enduring interest is a new two-volume chronology entitled *Day by Day: the Twenties* (2008, 978-0-8160-7183-8, \$193.05) published by **Facts on File**.

Edited by **Rodney P. Carlisle**, Professor Emeritus at **Rutgers**, these two volumes provide students and interested researchers a cavalcade of facts about events, not just in the United States, but in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific. However, that being said, this set still focuses predominantly on events here in the United States. Major categories of coverage include U.S. Politics and Social Issues, Foreign Policy and Defense as well as the Economy and the Environment. And while there are also broader sections on Science, Technology, and Nature as well as Culture, Leisure, and Lifestyle, these too are dominated by U.S. events.

The set is introduced by a brief history of the Twenties which is followed by a year by year decade summary providing overall highlights. Nonetheless, the vast majority of this reference is taken up by a day by day chronology of events related to the regions and categories mentioned above. Most entries are brief and to the point describing the event, its facts and personalities. This is followed by a general index that “refers to all daily entries... keyed to page numbers and column headings.” The indexing for each entry is then organized by year when necessary. By and large this arrangement is satisfactory when a topic has few entries. However, in cases like the names of famous people or individual countries, the entries can be so numerous that even though they are organized by year, it can be tedious trying to find exactly what you are looking for.

Regardless, *Day by Day: the Twenties* fulfills its overall purpose nicely. It is loaded with both landmark national events and noteworthy local occurrences that helped define the decade. Historians of the era as well as the general reader in need of a few facts will be drawn to it. Both academic and larger public libraries where there is need should give it strong consideration.

Day by Day: the Twenties is part of **Facts on File's** series of decade long chronologies. The series starts with these volumes on the Twenties and ends with a set covering the Nineties. They can also be purchased as a group (2008, 978-0-8160-7688-8, \$1,372.80).

Routledge has just published an academic title that could also draw an interested audience in larger public libraries. The *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (2008, 978-0-415-97569-8, \$90) is a single-volume work that incorporates up to date insights into the life and times of **Jesus** of Nazareth. Consisting of 227 entries written by 110 international scholars, the articles here take into consideration current archaeology and the ongoing publication of primary materials, as well as past scholarship, in an attempt to create a balanced treatment.

The *Encyclopedia* is built around a number of major themes. Providing context there are articles that cover background literature like the Dead Sea Scrolls as well as entries that discuss *Old Testament* figures referenced in the Gospels. There are also those that deal with the history of the *New Testament* within the milieu of the Roman Empire along with those that focus on contemporary institutions like Jewish Festivals and the Temple. Of course major events and important figures in **Jesus's** life are included as are articles that address his teachings and the individual Gospel accounts. Another theme getting considerable attention is the diversity of scholarly contribution reflected by varying viewpoints ranging from those of **N.T. Wright** to those of the **Jesus Seminar**. In addition, diverse theoretical issues and concepts are treated ranging from the **Jesus** tradition in **Paul's** writings to the meaning of Discipleship, and from the notion of the Divine Man to the Messianic Secret. Aside from the thoughtfully written articles, the bibliographies are an impressive feature containing numerous citations from both scholarly books and articles. There is one minor problem and it is the use of abbreviations for the journal titles in these citations. One can make an educated guess, but it would have been helpful to have them spelled out or to have provided a list of titles with the abbreviations.

The *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* draws from scholarship both mainstream and controversial to provide a multifaceted impression of the historic **Jesus**. In doing so, it embodies an active field of study that often creates as many questions as it answers. Given this, the *Encyclopedia* does not pretend to be the final word. Instead it is a valuable marker of the current state of **Jesus** studies.

Interest in the life of **Jesus** and the world he lived in is abiding and deep so this reference could have a home in a number of libraries. Academic libraries supporting religious studies may want copies for either reference or circulation depending on need while, given the price, larger public libraries may find it more suitable for their reference collections.

Sage's recent *Encyclopedia of Psychology*

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and Law (2008, 978-1412951890, \$350) is a subject encyclopedia that, as often is the case, attempts to define an emerging discipline. It assumes a broad mandate reflecting recent scholarship and practice from various fields of psychology as they relate to the law. At the same time it draws, "from the related discipline of criminal justice." Accordingly, the result is a two-volume encyclopedia that tries to make sense of an "array of contemporary and historical psychology and law topics" with more than 300 entries.

Fortunately, lending organization to this set by pulling together related entries, there is a Reader's Guide that lists individual articles under 17 categories. These categories range from Criminal Competencies to the Psychology of Policing and from Mental Health Law to Violence Risk Assessment. As a result, coverage runs from articles on the competency to stand trial and the capacity to waive Miranda rights, to those that discuss profiling, police stress, institutionalization, forcible medication and specific assessment tools like the Novaco Anger Scale and the Hare Psychopathy Checklist.

As you would expect, articles focus on both the legal and psychological aspects of the topic. For example the article on Competency for Execution discussed legal standards and constitutionality as well as assessment of, and treatment for, restoring competency. Each article has a useful bibliography and in addition to the Reader's Guide mentioned above, there are "see also" references linking related articles. Although intended for scholarly and professional audiences, the articles are accessible to the informed lay reader.

As is common with reference works that try to bridge disciplines, the more time spent familiarizing yourself with the contents the more useful the resources becomes. *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Law* is no exception. Academic libraries that support criminal justice and psychology of law courses will want to consider it, as will interested professionals in need of background information.

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Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

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

Column Editor's Note:

Let me offer you a hypothetical scenario: you are a reference librarian working your desk shift and a patron requests assistance with a research paper about the history of Mexican food. The caveat: your patron is not allowed to use **Google** (or any other free Web tool) to find information about said topic. Ahh — your patron has been given an exercise not only in writing, but in learning how to research "old school." What is a librarian to do?

Fortunately, **Greenwood Press** recently published *Latino Food Culture. Food Cultures in America* — something to consider when helping satisfy your patron's research needs. **ATG** reviewer **Phillip Powell** examines this new title that covers Latin American cuisine and its history.

Continuing with our hypothetical scenario, as a reference librarian you are well aware that a patron request for help with any sort of paper is often accompanied by a patron

request for assistance with citations. How convenient that the **Modern Language Association** has put forth a third edition of their popular and handy *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*. Making her *Monographic Musings* debut, **Jannette Finch**, **College of Charleston North Campus and Lowcountry Graduate Center Librarian**, offers a valuable overview of the new edition and captures several of the differences

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Serious fans of college basketball will welcome a recent three-volume set from **McFarland**. *Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Games* (2008, 9780786429370, \$295) provides a barrage of facts and statistics about the most storied conference in the game from the start of the conference in 1953 through the spring of 2006.

The basic arrangement is chronological with sections devoted to each season and then subdivided with coverage given each team including a "box score" entry for each game they played during the season. There is also a complete roster of players, a record of wins and losses, and a list of awards and additional milestones. Other sections include similar facts and figures for the annual ACC tournaments as well as the involvement of ACC teams in the NCAA and NIT tournaments. There is also a listing of players who made the all-ACC and all America teams. Indexes include those by player, coach and team.

Author **Michael E. O'Hara** spent ten years accumulating this information from newspapers located throughout the ACC. (Many of these newspapers are housed in the **Perkins Library at Duke University** which **O'Hara** used extensively.) When needed information was unavailable from newspaper accounts he contacted the schools directly. In short, this was a major commitment of time along with

conscientious and painstaking research. The result is a comprehensive reference set devoted to arguably the most important conference in college basketball. Basketball historians as well as serious fans will treasure **O'Hara's Atlantic Coast Conference Men's Basketball Games** for its facts and statistics. But they also will value it for the memories that it will spark. Libraries, both public and academic that collect seriously in sports and sports history will want to add it to their collections.

The art of bibliography is still alive as evidenced by new editions of a couple of standby sources. First is the 5th edition of the **MLA's Literary Research Guide: an Annotated Listing of Reference Sources in English Literary Studies** (2008, 978-0873528085, \$37.50). While once again edited by respected scholar **James L. Harner**, this new edition marks a departure of sorts. There are "far more electronic sources, and the wholesale deletion of entries for scholarly journals and background studies as well as the section on encyclopedias in the Literature-Related Topics and Sources division." The deletion of scholarly journals will disturb some but **Harner** explains that it was done "to make room for the electronic resources and to sharpen the focus on reference resources." Given the changing nature of research, this is an understandable decision. Regardless, there are a total of 1,059 entries and a new section on cultural studies. Of the total number of entries, 482 are revised.

Each entry contains full bibliographic

information along with annotations. Besides the highly selective and scholarly nature of the resources, the annotations are a real strength. They offer rich and thorough descriptions of each source with objective evaluations including shortcomings as well as strengths. Students and scholars are well served by such serious discussions of the works covered here.

As a single volume resource surveying a specific reference literature, **MLA's Literary Research Guide**... is hard to beat. The scope of its coverage is truly impressive as is the quality of the sources included. However, as noted above, it is the annotations that make this work an essential guide for graduate students and faculty. Upper division undergraduates majoring in English, American or other English language literatures will also want to spend time familiarizing themselves with it. In short, it is a necessary addition to both reference and circulating collections as well as a prime candidate for personal bookshelves.

A broader perspective on the reference literature is offered by the second bibliography referred to above. **ALA's Reference Sources for Small and Medium Size Libraries** (2008, 978-0838909430, \$80) is now in its 7th edition. Led by **Jack O'Gorman**, Chair of the Editorial Board of *Reference Books Bulletin* from 2001 to 2004, a team of respected reference librarians have combined efforts to update this standard collection development tool. In doing so, they have been careful to maintain the selective nature of the

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not benefited from the copyediting that publishers supply as value added to the process. Scholars who are jumping on this bandwagon should think twice about exposing their unedited prose, warts and all, to the world before it gets treated and refined by accommodating copyeditors.

Maybe the faculty at **Harvard** in the arts and sciences, and now in the law school, or those who have followed suit at **Stanford's School of Education** think their prose is beyond reproach and in need of no such patching and repairing. Wrong! Two of the three authors whose writings I used as examples above came from **Harvard** (and the third from **Princeton**). The administrators at **Harvard** who have championed making the work of the faculty freely available on the Internet seem completely oblivious to this danger of exposing so much bad and error-filled writing. Now they would prefer, of course, to have PDFs of the final articles as published mounted on **Harvard's** institutional repository. But surely they are not naïve enough to think that most publishers will comply with their wish, at the risk of undermining their own businesses — and I include here university presses and society publishers as well as for-profit companies. To avoid potential embarrassment, they therefore have two choices: either hire staff to copyedit the articles before they go up on **Harvard's** site or help authors pay fees to publishers that will compensate them for allowing final published articles to be available via open access. The former choice would be expensive and administratively cumbersome, not to mention adding yet another version of the work to the public record. The latter would be administratively easier but expensive, too, thus not really helping to solve the problem of the high cost of journal publishing that the proposal was intended to accomplish. Instead of paying for subscriptions, **Harvard** would simply be substituting payment of OA fees, with little likelihood that the overall costs of the system would be reduced in any significant way.

The problem of having multiple versions of articles is a real cost of Green OA that needs to be studied further. Perhaps, for purposes of teaching in the classroom or simply sharing

knowledge with colleagues around the world, unedited versions would suffice. But even at this level there are risks of propagating errors, as in mistakes in quotations that once used incorrectly may be multiplied many times over, as readers do not bother to go back to the original sources to check for accuracy but trust the authority of the scholar using them to have quoted them correctly. (My correspondent who edits articles for science journals confirms the seriousness of this problem: "Huge errors can creep into the literature when authors use preprint [unedited, unreviewed] versions of papers, and the problem snowballs: so few authors return to primary sources that incorrect interpretations are perpetuated and persist in the literature to damage future generations.") Surely, then, for purposes of formal publication, the additional level of quality control that is provided by good copyediting is a value worth paying for, and libraries would do well to reflect whether their needs as repositories of authoritative knowledge would be well served by relying on anything but the versions of articles that are in their very final form, suitable for long-term archiving. Whether students and scholars who access the unedited versions will bother to go to the archival versions for citations in writings that they produce remains to be seen, but clearly they should be encouraged to do so — students, because they need to be taught responsible scholarly methods, and scholars, because they have a professional obligation to their peers to do so.

How big a problem may this turn out to be? Some sense of it comes from a recently published, and much discussed, paper with the cute subtitle "Fawly Towers of Knowledge?" by **Malcolm Wright** and **J. Scott Armstrong** in the March/April 2008 issue of *Interfaces*, who write on "The Ombudsman: Verification of Citations" (http://marketing.wharton.upenn.edu/Marketing_Content_Management/Marketing_files/Publication_Files/Citations-Interfaces.pdf). Their first paragraph neatly summarizes the nature and extent of the problem: "The growth of scientific knowledge requires the correct reporting of relevant studies. Unfortunately, current procedures give little assurance that authors of papers published in leading academic journals follow this practice. Instead, the evidence suggests that researchers often do not read the relevant research papers. This manifests itself in two ways:

First, researchers overlook relevant papers. Second, they make errors when reporting on the papers, either through incorrect referencing or incorrect quotation of the contents of the cited paper." They go on to cite previous studies of incorrect references in other disciplines ranging from 31 percent in public health journals to as high as 67 percent in obstetrics and gynecology journals and studies of errors in quotation with similarly disturbing numbers, such as 20 percent for medical journals in a systematic survey conducted in 2003. Remember that these errors occur in published articles. The likelihood is that the rates would be significantly higher without the intervention of copyeditors.

The fact is that, for all the value of peer review, it is the rare academic reader who will take the trouble to check references and quotations for accuracy. Scholars are aware that copyeditors can be relied upon to scrutinize manuscripts more closely for such details, so they generally do not bother to spend time on this task themselves. But even copyeditors cannot afford to check everything; it is very costly to do the kind of fine-grained editing, involving trips to the library, that I was allowed to do at **Princeton** forty years ago. The economics of publishing can no longer afford such a luxury, and many publishers have cut back on proof-reading, too, or even eliminated it altogether for cost-saving reasons. Fortunately, the ease of access to reliable online resources for fact-checking, reference-checking, and even checking of quotes has made it possible for copyeditors to continue doing some of this very detailed work even in today's economy at reasonable expense. And editing online provides other advantages that improve the efficiency of copyeditors and help keep costs in check. It would be a shame if concerns for reducing costs target copyediting as a dispensable frill, for its contribution to the excellence of scholarship is much greater than most people who have not directly benefited from it realize.

I end, therefore, with a question and a plea. The question is: how far do we want to allow open access to exacerbate the problem of "Fawly Towers of Knowledge?" The plea is: when open access is discussed as a panacea for facilitating the dissemination of knowledge worldwide, don't forget the contribution that good copyediting makes to ensuring that such "knowledge" is communicated clearly and accurately. 🌱

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sources listed, while at the same time, reflecting the emergence of new electronic formats.

The book is divided into 20 chapters covering broad topics ranging from Health and Medicine to Crafts and Hobbies; Words and Language to Science and Technology; and Political Science and Law to Performing Arts. Each entry is annotated with descriptive and evaluative comments and analysis. Although not as scholarly and comprehensive as those in the *Literary Research Guide*, these annotations are more than adequate for the

purpose of providing selection guidance. Entries also include most of the bibliographic information necessary for ordering including ISBN or ISSN numbers. Interestingly, individual prices are not provided. Rather a rating system using the dollar sign is used. Hence sources ranging from free Websites to books less than 100 dollars are rated as a \$ while a database costing more than 1000 dollars would be rated as \$\$\$\$.

This makes some sense given the growing volatility of prices, as any **Amazon** search will confirm. The availability of free reference Websites also plays into this rationale.

Reference Sources for Small and Medium Size Libraries is a valuable and important tool.

It gives professional reference librarians an authoritative list of respected works for initiating collection development in a new library as well as recommended sources for maintaining and expanding existing collections. It can also serve double duty as a helpful primer and guide to the reference literature for library schools students as well as newly minted professionals.

Librarians responsible for reference collections at small and medium size public libraries as well as those working in branches of larger systems will welcome this work. Reference librarians new to the field as well as students may also want to add it to their personal collections. 🌱