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## From the Reference Desk

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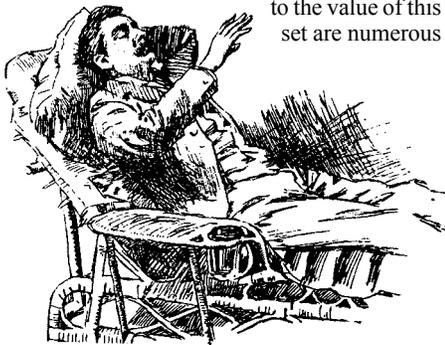
# From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Viewed by many as the seminal text in Western culture, the *Bible* has had a profound influence, not only on religious belief, but on “art, literature, law, politics, and other fields too numerous to mention.” Given its significance, the *Bible* is the subject of intense, ever-changing, and often controversial study and analysis. In an attempt to encompass all these elements of biblical scholarship, **Oxford University Press** is publishing a series of two-volume encyclopedias called *The Oxford Encyclopedias of the Bible* that it hopes will portray the dynamic nature of biblical studies as they have evolved over time, as well as the current state of the discipline. Plans call for each set to have an individual focus such as “the *Bible* and theology, the *Bible* and law, the *Bible* and ethics, the *Bible* and the arts...” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible* (2011, 9780195377378, \$395) is the initial entry in this series and in a sense offers a foundation for those that will follow.

Fortunately, the scope of these first two volumes is broad and not merely restricted to the accepted canonical works. The so-called Gnostic Gospels and others writings that have been excluded from the “authoritative” version of the *Bible* are given equal treatment in this set. Nor is coverage restricted solely to the books of the Christian tradition. Ancient Jewish scriptures purged from the *Christian Bible* after the Reformation are also included. In fact, other ancient writings having scriptural relevance to Biblical studies are discussed with substantial essays on rabbinic literature, the letters of church fathers like **Clement** and **Ignatius**, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Nag Hammadi Library. In addition, context is provided with entries that define the various canons, discuss text criticism, and cover the various Greek, Latin and English translations.

Editor **Michael D. Coogan** thoughtfully insures consistency in treatment by asking contributors to structure each entry to provide the name of the book and its meaning, canonical status, authorship, date and context, literary history, structure and contents, interpretation, reception history, and a bibliography. This approach results in entries that are uniformly thorough and scholarly and that provide each topic with the seriousness that it deserves. Adding to the value of this set are numerous



features including a complete list of articles, relevant maps and charts, the various biblical canons listed under their corresponding traditions, a topical outline grouping related articles, and a directory of contributors and their entries. As noted above, each entry has bibliography, all of which are worthy of the topics being discussed and offering the reader valuable insights on further research.

Obviously, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible* is not for the “born again” believer looking for fundamentalist truths. It treats the books of the *Bible* and related texts as living documents available for scrutiny and varied interpretation. The folks at **Oxford UP** should be pleased with the results. These two volumes are a highly impressive opening to a series of reference works that promise to become standards in the field. This introductory *Encyclopedia* will be relied on repeatedly by undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty, as well as ministers, rabbis, and lay readers seeking a scholarly foundation to their understanding of the books of the *Bible*. Most academic libraries, as well as many larger public libraries, will find it a necessary addition to their collections.

*(The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible* is also available online as part of the *Oxford Digital Reference Shelf* with the e-reference edition ISBN: 9780199755417. As many of you already know, in mid-2012 all online general reference content that is currently available within *Oxford Reference Online* and the *Oxford Digital Reference Shelf* will be integrated onto the new *Oxford Quick Reference* platform to become *Oxford Quick Reference* and *Oxford Reference Library*. Given this, the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible* should become part of the *Oxford Reference Library*. Anyone needing more information should check out <http://www.oxford-digitalreference.com/>.)

**CQ Press** has published another timely political reference that deals with an important topic of ever-increasing interest. *Women in American politics: History and Milestones* (2012, 978-1-6087-1007-2, \$ 225) is a two-volume effort that tries to encapsulate the role of women in the nation’s political life.

Rather than an alphabetical listing of entries, this set utilizes a series of topical chapters to get its point across. The first two chapters lay a solid foundation with the first addressing the “battle for the vote” running from 1840 to 1920, while the second chapter discusses the women who actually won or were appointed to office before the ratification of the 19th Amendment. (Although they could not vote, women could be elected to office in progressive states like Iowa, where **Julia C. Addington** was first elected as school superintendent of Mitchell County in 1869.) Many of the remain-

ing chapters focus on women by office held, so you have specific coverage of women in elected offices like State Representatives, State Senators, U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators, Governors and Lieutenant Governors, Mayors, and Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates. Politically-appointed offices like Cabinet members, Ambassadors, and various members of the state and federal courts also have their own chapters. (Actually the judicial officers are a mix between elected and appointed positions.) These are followed by chapters that discuss women and their roles in political organizations like parties, interest groups, and political action committees. The final chapter is a state-by-state guide that rounds things up by offering “thumbnail overviews” including key facts and “firsts,” as well as a list of women office holders throughout the state’s history. Each chapter is written in a reader-friendly and jargon-free style that will be appreciated by high school and college students, as well as interested lay readers. The text is full of relevant charts and sidebars that help elucidate issues being discussed, and brief biographic sketches of prominent women are interspersed throughout the chapters. References and further readings close out each chapter, providing leads to other valuable resources. As with any reference work structured this way, indexes are essential. This set has both name and subject indexes that are thorough and provide easy access to specifics.

*Women in American politics: History and Milestones* is a story of ongoing struggle and achievement as women juggle family and career responsibilities and, in many cases, fight stereotypes to take an active role in political life. But as these two volumes highlight, women’s involvement in the political process is essential in providing a unique and needed perspective. Well-written and loaded with fascinating and enlightening facts and observations, this set will be a valuable addition to either reference or circulating collections. Both academic and public libraries would be wise to give it serious consideration.

## Extra Servings

**Berkshire Publishing** announced that it is planning to release a new, updated, and greatly expanded edition of the *Berkshire Encyclopedia of World Sport*. According to information on their Website, “the third edition of this... encyclopedia will bring the study of sports into the 21st century by integrating **Berkshire’s** past work on women’s sports and extreme sports into a complete sporting library.” (978-19933782-67-6, \$750. Prepub: \$685.)

**Salem Press** just published *Great Lives from History: Latinos* in February 2012. This three-volume set “features 518 essays from the eighteenth century to the present... Many

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individuals are household names, famous for such high-profile professions as entertainment, music, politics, and sports, while others have received less attention but made important contributions to civil rights and science or helped pave the way for others in their community in areas such as education, law, and business.”

*The History of Chinese Civilisation*, a four-volume set will be published in May 2012 by Cambridge University Press. “Written by scholars at Peking University, this is a history of Chinese civilisation ... from Neolithic times to the founding of the Chinese Republic in 1911. Each of the four volumes covers political and social institutions, economics, religion, philosophy, science and technology, literature, art, and daily life.” (9781107013094, \$350)

Sage Publications has some upcoming titles worth thinking about:

- *The African American Electorate: A Statistical History* published under the CQ Press imprint is scheduled for release in July 2012 (978-0-87289-508-9, \$350.) Purportedly this title “brings together... the extant, fugitive and recently discovered registration data on African-American voters from Colonial America to the present, and traces the history of the laws dealing with enfranchisement and disenfranchisement of

African Americans. It also provides election return data for African-American candidates in national and sub-national elections over this same time span and explores the variables that influence the political behaviors of the African American community.”

- SAGE Reference is also releasing the *Encyclopedia of Gender in Media* in July 2012 (978-1-4129-9079-0, \$125; eISBN: 978-1-4522-1854-0, \$156.) This reference hopes to examine “the complex role of the media in enabling, facilitating, or challenging the social construction of gender in our society,” as well as explore “the social construction of masculinity as well as femininity in a variety of entertainment and news content in print and electronic media.”

And here are a couple of titles that have just been published by Sage:

- *Encyclopedia of Global Studies* (ISBN: 9781412964296, \$595) covers both transnational topics and intellectual approaches in the emerging field of global studies and focuses on themes like “the globalization of economics and technologies; the diaspora of cultures and dispersion of peoples; the transnational aspects of social and political change,” and others.
- *Encyclopedia of Consumption and Waste: The Social Science of Garbage*

(ISBN: 978-1-4129-8819-3, \$350; eISBN: 978-1-4522-1852-6, \$438) The *Encyclopedia of Consumption and Waste* “explores the topic across multiple disciplines within the social sciences and ranges further to include business, consumerism, environmentalism, and marketing.”

(Sage Reference works are available electronically and free 30-day online trials are available at [www.sagepub.com/freetrial](http://www.sagepub.com/freetrial).)

Grey House Publishers recently released a number of updates to some of their previous titles, including:

- *Nations of the World, 2012* (softcover ISBN 13: 978-1-59237-760-2, \$180) — The new edition covers “the living conditions, social standings, and economic climates of 229 nations... new countries include South Sudan and Saint Maarten.” And since the last edition “there have been 32 head of state elections, resulting in 17 new leaders, and 41 general elections, resulting in 10 changes in government.”
- *Ancestry & Ethnicity in America: A Comparative Guide to over 200 Ethnic Backgrounds* (softcover ISBN 13: 978-1-59237-997-2, \$295) is now in its 2nd edition and has been divided into two volumes. (EBook ISBN: 978-1-59237-998-9)

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- *The Directory of Venture Capital and Private Equity Firms, 2012* is in its 16th edition (softcover ISBN: 9778-1-59237-855-5; List Price: \$685, Library Price: \$450). This title is also available in **Grey House's** online database platform, <http://gold.greyhouse.com>.

**Wiley-Blackwell** has also been busy publishing a number of new sets:

- Those titles released in January 2012 include *The Encyclopedia of War* edited by **Gordon Martel**, providing "an overview of the most important events, people, and terms associated with warfare." (978-1-4051-9037-4, \$795 — also available via **Wiley Online**, Online ISBN: 9781444338232)
- *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization* edited by **George Thomas Kurian** is a four-volume set "that focuses on the history and impact of Christianity and how it has shaped societies around the world." (978-1-4051-5762-9, \$595 — Online ISBN: 9780470670606)
- *The Encyclopedia of Peace Psychology* is a three-volume set edited by **Daniel J. Christie** "that focus exclusively on psychological analyses and perspectives on peace and conflict." (978-1-4051-9644-4, \$495 — Online ISBN: 9780470672532)
- *The Wiley-Blackwell History of American Film* offers "a chronological portrait of American cinema from its origins to the present day" in a four-volume set (978-1-4051-7984-3, \$495 — Online ISBN: 9780470671153)
- Published in February 2012, *The Encyclopedia of Radicals in Chemistry, Biology and Materials* "presents methodologies and mechanisms involving free radicals of chemical and biological research, including applications in materials science and medicine" in a single volume. (978-0-470-97125-3, \$890; \$1,050.00 after April 30th)

All of the above works except the *Encyclopedia of Radicals in Chemistry, Biology and Materials* are currently available electronically via the **Wiley Online Library** at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>. Titles can be purchased via a one-time fee option — pay once for perpetual access or by annual subscription providing access to the active reference work for twelve months and includes all updates. (The *Encyclopedia of Radicals in Chemistry, Biology and Materials* will be available later this month.)



## From A University Press — One Size Doesn't Fit All

Column Editor: **Leila W. Salisbury** (University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, MS 39211; Phone: 601-432-6205) <[lsalisbury@ihl.state.ms.us](mailto:lsalisbury@ihl.state.ms.us)>

As a woman who is 6'2", I am very familiar with the reality that one size does not fit all. (A recent dip into old college photo albums confirms that in the days before online shopping made finding special sizes easier, I apparently never owned a single pair of pants that was long enough.) Though I am finally comfortable with this concept in my personal life, it took me a bit longer to understand how to apply it in my work as a scholarly publisher.

Before becoming a press director, I worked on the marketing side of publishing, and for years I operated under the erroneous belief that there was one way to sell books to academic libraries and that libraries all wanted and needed the same things. In joining the **University Press of Mississippi** in 2008, I was quickly set right on this point. **Mississippi** is a consortship press, so in the first few months on the job the editors and I traveled to our eight state campuses to meet faculty and administrators and talk about the work of the **Press**. Based on the suggestion of the state's library association director, I also made appointments to meet the library deans.

What an education in a very short period of time. After three meetings, I realized that in many ways, librarians view scholarly publishing as a mysterious process with equally mysterious business models behind it, and I saw that as a publisher (who should know better), I was unaware of a number of the significant changes taking place within academic libraries. Though my academic background is in English and I don't possess an MBA, it did seem obvious to me that this way of conducting our joint work — making decisions without the benefit of a great deal of mutual understanding of business practices and needs — could be greatly improved.

Publishers, even within the classification of academic publishers, operate in many different ways and under different publishing models. Commercial academic publishers are a class to themselves, the force behind much of journals publishing, textbooks, and new electronic content aggregations. There are Open Access publishers and academic societies who publish their own journals and other materials. And then there are the university presses. Even within this group, there is an incredible range of press size, income, and operating strategies.

University presses are most often alike in the fact that their editorial work is grounded in the peer review process, and yet what they publish — and how — can vary widely. Monographs to regional trade titles and everything in between appear on their lists, and book pricing, formats (hardcover, paperback, or simultaneous), and eBook models and pricing (when the eBooks are even available, that

is) are all over the map. The **Association of American University Presses** offers a number of excellent meetings and professional development and networking opportunities annually where best practices are discussed, but member presses formulate their own business plans according to the expectations of their own host institutions, funding formulas, available technology resources and partners, and guidance from editorial and advisory boards. What works beautifully for one press may be unrealistic or even undesirable for another.

As I learned and am still learning, the same is often true of academic libraries. Within Mississippi, the academic libraries serve campuses ranging in enrollment from just under 3,000 students to more than 20,000. Some of these campuses have distance learning programs or multiple campuses, though all of them seem to be finding that increasingly their students want to access materials online and that these students feel more comfortable texting a question to a reference librarian rather than asking in person, even when that student is sitting at a table within sight of the reference desk.

Though this will come as a surprise to none, money is often the chief differentiator between libraries, dramatically affecting the services they offer and the collections they develop. Before beginning this column, I emailed a few of my library contacts to ask how students were accessing material and how/if budgets were shifting to accommodate changes in student and faculty needs and preferences. In my own conversations and work over the past four years, I had become aware that university presses frequently formulate strategy and pricing based on the operations of **ARL** libraries. While I do not in any way mean to minimize these institutions as important customers and campus partners, it struck me that there are many, many libraries in this country that fall outside this group — far greater in number than those within the **ARL** classification — and I wondered if we as publishers were meeting their needs well.

When I reached out a few weeks ago, one dean sent a thought-provoking response to my question about how libraries were handling the issue of resources in electronic format: "I think you'll find two primary camps trying to address this transition — the haves and the have nots." I had also asked him what he thought about the new monograph aggregations being launched this year and next, and he noted that while he thought the students and faculty on his campus would benefit from such subscriptions, he avoided "new ongoing annual expenses like the plague."

He concluded, "Perhaps you could consider the mindset of the two camps as you write articles and alternate the discussion of strategies for those with ample resources looking to aggressively build their collections/access and others who are looking to creatively economize until more stable funding materializes." His suggestion stuck with me, providing both the inspiration for this piece and a framework for future columns.

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