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Book Reviews--Monographic Musings

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Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Regina Gong** (Head of Technical Services & Systems, Lansing Community College Library) <gongr1@lcc.edu>



Column Editor's Note: *In this issue, you will see my first book review for ATG. I just can't pass this book **Leading Libraries: How to Create a Service Culture** since leadership has been on my mind these days. I've just participated in the **2015 ALA Leadership Institute** last August, and to say that it was an amazing experience is an understatement. I came out of that four-day Institute inspired by the amazing librarians and library leaders I was fortunate enough to meet and collaborate with. The authors of **Leading Libraries** urge us to focus on cultivating a culture of service since libraries are, after all, a service organization. In **Letting Go of Legacy Services**, we see case studies and interviews of different libraries that are dealing with difficult situations. There's a lot of "to-do" in our list, projects to manage, and initiatives to implement, but we sometimes hesitate to let go of services that don't work anymore or are no longer relevant. Meanwhile, **The Library Innovation Toolkit: Ideas, Strategies, and Programs** gives us plenty of ideas for new programs and services we can implement in our libraries. Here we find innovative outreach services, technologies, and programs that we can adopt in our workplace. Speaking of innovation, the **Personal Librarian: Enhancing the Student Experience** is one example of a new way to approach the embedded librarian concept. It discusses how liaison programs, information literacy instruction, and embedded librarianship can intersect so we can offer a "personal" librarian service to our students. The book **Managing with Data: Using ACRL Metrics and PLAMetrics** focuses on library data and how to use it to generate meaningful metrics and reports to prove our value and assess our services. In **Preserving Complex Digital Objects**, we see how experts from various fields such as information technology, digital humanities, digital curation, and game design came together to share their perspectives on preserving software art, gaming environments, virtual worlds, and simulation. Pretty interesting if I may say so myself. And finally, **Usability and the Mobile Web: A LITA Guide** gives readers practical advice on how to implement a mobile interface that is both usable and user-centered. With the ubiquity of smartphones and mobile devices, this is important to keep in mind.*

As always, I hope you enjoy reading the book reviews in this issue and will be compelled enough to read some of them if it piques your interest. Please send me an email if you want to be a book reviewer at <gongr1@lcc.edu>. Happy reading! — RG

VanDuinkerken, Wyoma and Wendi Arant Kaspar. *Leading Libraries: How to Create a Service Culture.* Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2015. 9780838913123. 167 pages. \$65.00.

Reviewed by **Regina Gong** (Head of Technical Services & Systems, Lansing Community College Library) <gongr1@lcc.edu>

What does it mean to be a leader? What are the qualities of a good leader? Are leaders born or made? How can we effectively lead and imbibe a service culture? These and more are what you can find in this book. Don't expect though to read a how-to manual on being a good manager or leader. Instead, what you will see is a different way of looking at leadership in libraries. It is one that emphasizes the idea of servant leadership and a culture that places service to library patrons, customers, or users above all else. After all, libraries, no matter what type, are service organizations so the idea of cultivating a culture of service is spot on.

The authors, **Wyoma VanDuinkerken** and **Wendi Arant Kaspar**, are librarians and co-editors of some of the major peer-reviewed journals in the field of librarianship. Both are accomplished writers and share a common interest in library leadership, administration, change management, and strategic planning. Their writing style is conversational and engaging. At just about one hundred fifty-two pages excluding bibliog-

raphy, many will probably read this book from cover to cover.

The book is divided into ten chapters. Each chapter discusses various issues that leaders face or need to seriously think about in their leadership journey. The authors' introduction sets the stage for what the book is about and explains in detail the authors' view of service culture and what it means to lead not just from a position of authority but the act and behaviors of leading in whatever capacity a person is in. Succeeding chapters in the book delve into issues such as leadership versus management paradigm; leadership theories; practicing conscientiousness; building rapport with colleagues and co-workers; balancing encouragement and accountability; getting buy-in in the midst of change; creating a culture of innovation; sustaining service as a value; strategic planning; and strategic thinking. There are a lot of theoretical discussions on various management concepts and practices that the authors take from a number of seminal and classic works by **Peter Drucker**, **Stephen Covey**, and **Warren Bennis**, to name a few. **VanDuinkerken** and **Arant Kaspar** try to maintain a balance between the theoretical discussions and practical applications through the reflective exercises and tools they present in every chapter. It also has sections in every chapter called "Service Leadership in Practice" that are essentially case studies illustrating each topic. While the characters in these case studies are fictitious, it still hits home, and the reader can identify with some of them since it is based on real-life work situations. The reflections at the end of the chapters spur the readers to think deeply on how they might apply the qualities of leadership in their work and personal lives. Finally, the notes in each chapter serve as additional resources for those who might want to read further and explore the topics in detail.

This is probably one of the best books on leadership in libraries that has come out so far. It is a great resource not only for librarians who are already in leadership positions but for those who wish to lead who may not be quite ready to do so.

Evangeliste, Mary and Katherine Furlong, (Eds.). *Letting Go of Legacy Services.* Chicago: American Library Association, 2014. 978-0-8389-1220-1. 159 pages. \$57.00

Reviewed by **Anne Driscoll** (Education Librarian, George Mason University) <adrisc02@gmu.edu>

Increasingly libraries are reviewing the relevance of traditional services and seeking new ways to serve faculty and students, making hard decisions about cutting costs in the face of budget reductions, balancing print versus electronic materials, and trying to provide access to resources in the face of the cuts. The problem is compounded by the fact that libraries are increasingly seen as dinosaurs, unwilling or unable to change in order to retain their relevance.

Through a series of nine case studies and two interviews, **Evangeliste** and **Furlong** provide readers the opportunity to look at multiple perspectives of how libraries are dealing with tough questions including identification of services, programs, and activities which have served their purpose, but now should be let go. All with an eye towards what libraries are and will be in the future. Not only do the case studies tell us we are not alone, but they provide the reader with decision-making frameworks which can be adapted to our own libraries.

The book discusses issues faced by libraries such as:

- 1) the need to make drastic cuts to print periodicals while still providing crucial access to critical STEM journals;
- 2) a 37% budget reduction in conjunction with a county mandated course management system (CMS) which was further hampered by the County's Web guidelines;
- 3) the need to overhaul legacy services;

continued on page 53

Book Reviews from page 52

- 4) changes to delivery of traditional reference services;
- 5) unfilled positions in conjunction with their ultimate removal of the line item, and staff and user resistance to change;
- 6) how budget cuts, natural disasters, and horrific staff reductions, while devastating, can lead to tremendous positive changes;
- 7) how changes in library leadership and shifts to the university's strategic plan are opportunities to solidify the library's impact and relevance;
- 8) how to align divergent department cultures to facilitate change; and finally
- 9) the need to create new spaces which can facilitate sharing and creation of knowledge.

Each of the libraries facing these issues find their own unique solutions to address their problems. The results are cost savings which prevent other resources from being cut, streamlining and movement of many services to the Internet, patron self-service, movement away from job silos to shared workloads, and focused training. The libraries learn the importance of utilizing data to make a point about service reductions and partnering with patrons to get buy-in to change. Another outcome is that library systems are now more flexible with constant evaluation being done for their usefulness and viability. In the process, patrons actually gain access to resources which they could not easily access before.

One lesson that the book discusses is the importance of adequate staff training. Libraries find that collaborations, broader skill sets, gaining library staff, and student buy-in are invaluable. Broader skill sets benefit libraries and add marketable skills to their employees. Many library personnel now find themselves with time freed up for less mundane tasks. Library staff can work in a smaller space, which then frees up a larger space that can be used by faculty and students to learn from each other and to create new knowledge in an informal setting.

Letting Go of Legacy Services is an excellent book that addresses problems and possible solutions that can be used by any library. While the case studies primarily discuss the experiences of academic libraries, the problems are faced and shared by libraries of all types.

Molaro, Anthony and Leah L. White, (Eds.).
The Library Innovation Toolkit: Ideas, Strategies, and Programs.
Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2015.
978-0-8389-1274-4. 216 pages. \$55.00.

Reviewed by **Amanda Vocks** (Technical Services Specialist,
Olin Library, Rollins College) <avocks@rollins.edu>

There is one common theme that the book *The Library Innovation Toolkit: Ideas, Strategies, and Programs* conveys: innovation takes collaboration with colleagues. Being innovative means understanding innovation and encouraging everyone to be a part of it. Moreover, the

continued on page 54

A Website Review — Cabell's International ... from page 51

the validity of an ever growing number of scholarly publications. For the price, I would think that **Cabell's** would be worth it for most institutions that have even a modest publication record. We can only hope that **Cabell's** will continue to expand the number of disciplines it covers and the number of journals it includes as well as the information provided about those journals. In an email exchange with a representative of **Cabell's** I was assured that: "**Cabell's** is always looking to expand its coverage according to the needs of the academic community. We recently added over 4,000 titles from the fields of mathematics and science. Our next focused collection effort, too, will be geared toward satisfying the desires of current and future users." 🌿

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focus of innovation should be on the needs of our users.

Edited by **Anthony Molaro** and **Leah L. White**, the book is divided into six parts. Each part addresses an area of innovation such as innovative culture; innovative staff; innovative outreach; innovative technology; innovative spaces; and innovative programs. It is refreshing to read a book about innovation that stresses the importance of diversity and team work. The authors discuss creating an environment that fosters innovation where everyone feels they can contribute and have value. This book will get you thinking about your entire library team as potential innovators.

I find myself agreeing wholeheartedly with many of the chapters. The themes of diversity, where anyone can be an innovator, and user-focused thinking is reinforced throughout the chapters. *The Library Innovation Toolkit* is not only a great resource for librarians but it also shows how staff and administration can be part of the innovation and overall success of the library. One section of high interest to me was Part Three. It highlights innovative outreach that urges staff to reach out and find partners and advocates. The authors in this section tell us about outreach programs that take place out in their community where library users and potential users actually are. We also hear about a book club and a trivia night held in an innovative setting. This is one of the most fun sections to read. I love the innovation of **Audrey Barbakoff's** *Ferry Tales* program, a wonderful idea based on her observations of the community she lives in and serves. **Barbakoff** stresses the importance of building something new and asking the community members what they think of the potential programs. This shows that the best way to be innovative is to listen to your community's needs. Forest Park Public Library is another great example of taking library programming straight to the community. Library programs should fulfill the needs of the community, and this section inspires readers with fun ideas from these two public libraries.

As a former public library staff who has now transitioned to an academic library position, it is pleasantly surprising to read that the editors examine and represent both the academic and public library perspectives in the book. At first I wonder if this book would be helpful for academic libraries, but as I keep on reading, I see that it is wonderfully balanced. The editors do a great job of pairing the academic and public perspectives and showing how they can learn from each other. This is of particular interest to me because one of the librarians I work with is trying to implement something similar to this at our institution. Newer librarians often feel a heavy pressure with the instructional responsibilities they have on their plates, and a program like LIT from **Virginia Tech** Library could be encouraging, supportive, and profoundly helpful to us new librarians. The LIT program can be beneficial to any library, public or academic, that offers instruction sessions to its patrons or users.

All in all, *The Library Innovation Toolkit* is a great read for anyone looking to create innovation within their organization.

Moniz, Richard, and Jean Moats, (Eds.). *The Personal Librarian: Enhancing the Student Experience.* Chicago: ALA Editions, 2014. 9780838912393. 143 pages. \$58.00.

Reviewed by **Emma Oxford** (Science Librarian, Olin Library, Rollins College) <eoxford@rollins.edu>

As its title suggests, *The Personal Librarian: Enhancing the Student Experience* makes a case for personal librarian (PL) programs at academic libraries, drawing on the experience of librarians at **Johnson & Wales University** for support. The editors, **Richard Moniz** and **Jean Moats**, as well as three of its contributors, **Joe Eshleman**, **Valerie Freeman**, and **David Jewell**, are librarians at **Johnson & Wales**. The final contributor, **Jo Henry**, is a librarian at **South Piedmont Community College**. **Moniz, Henry**, and **Eshleman** previously coauthored *Fundamentals for the Academic Liaison*.

The Personal Librarian is similar in tone to *Fundamentals*, offering guidelines and best practices. It begins by exploring the development of PL programs and then examines how information literacy, embedded

librarianship, and liaison librarianship dovetail with such programs. Two thought-provoking chapters consider what personal librarians can learn from other academic departments and businesses outside of academia, a helpful reminder that libraries have been taking cues from other institutions for years. *The Personal Librarian* concludes with data from a faculty survey at **Johnson & Wales**, a checklist of best practices, and some thoughts for the future.

There are certainly some interesting ideas here for getting students engaged with the library, and specifically with a librarian. One theme that stands out is marketing, and the emphasis is well-placed. Students will come to the library for help if they know and trust a librarian, and building that kind of relationship requires serious librarian outreach. A PL program is one way to frame library services to make students feel more at ease when seeking assistance, but while *The Personal Librarian* may be a helpful discussion on library marketing, it never succeeds in making its case that there is inherent value in a PL program.

One mystery readers are certain to find frustrating is that nowhere does a definition of "personal librarian" appear. This absence opens the door for conflicting ideas and recommendations among authors. Cobbling together a definition from the discussions in this book, one might arrive at something along the lines of "a personal librarian program is what libraries have been doing for years but with a different marketing strategy." For many libraries, this is not going to be an especially convincing argument for implementing such a program.

The weakest point in *The Personal Librarian* is the data from a faculty survey at **Johnson & Wales**. The case study is ostensibly meant to demonstrate the success of their PL program in terms of faculty opinion, but the data is not at all convincing. Surveys were conducted for only two semesters, with only ten faculty responses recorded and no clear majority expressing either positive or negative opinions. Comparing the data to the author's statement that the program brought "clear and obvious benefits to faculty and students," one cannot help but feel that these conclusions are erroneous at best. That's not to say the program was ineffective, but there is not enough data to support either conclusion, and nowhere is this limitation acknowledged.

The Personal Librarian can be a thought-provoking read, providing insights into how libraries can best market their services and what they can learn from other institutions. However, anyone expecting a handbook on how or why to develop a PL program will be disappointed.

Peter Herson, Robert E. Dugan, and Joseph R. Matthews. *Managing with Data: Using ACRLMetrics and PLAmetrics.*

Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2015.

ISBN: 978-0-8389-1243-0. 232 pages. \$85.00

Reviewed by **Dao Rong Gong** (Systems Librarian, Michigan State University Libraries) <gongd@msu.edu>

Library data is one thing that libraries are good at keeping, maintaining, and generating in order to make decisions that are evidence-based and data-driven. Increasingly, libraries of all types are realizing that in order to be relevant and financially sustainable in the long-term, data needs to be accessible in order to generate meaningful metrics and reports for decision-makers and stakeholders.

This is where the book *Managing with Data: Using ACRLMetrics and PLAmetrics* comes into play. This is the second collaboration between **Harnon, Dugan, and Matthews**, who earlier published the book *Getting Started with Evaluation* in 2013. In this new book, they provide their take on the two major data services for primary library data. ACRLMetrics provides comprehensive access to the annual **Association of Colleges & Research Libraries (ACRL) Academic Library Trends & Statistics Survey** data as well as the biennial **National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Academic Library Survey** data. It helps academic libraries demonstrate their value and benchmark other similar libraries in terms of collections, staffing, expenditures, and service activities. PLAmetrics is the public library equivalent of ACRLMetrics. Administered by the **Public Library Association (PLA)**, it provides timely data for all public libraries across the U.S. and Canada regarding finances, library use,

continued on page 55

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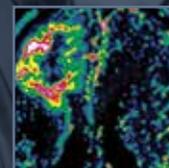
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Book Reviews from page 54

and library resources. Both of these services are subscription-only and require a library to pay an annual fee to access the Web-based portal and to generate reports.

The book contains detailed and illustrated step-by-step instructions that walk you through databases and data instruments for collecting, analyzing, and deriving data. Each chapter has useful exercises at the end where it also presents hypothetical propositions or statements for readers to think about and hit the ground running. It presents a well-balanced coverage for the life cycle of library data application. It not only covers library operation and services such as collection, services, staffing and usage, but also extends the discussion to other areas such as library advocacy, benchmarking, best practices, and accountability. These discussions illustrate and guide the thought process for library managers on why and how data can be extracted and presented to help management decisions.

The book might give the impression that it is merely about using ACRLMetrics and PLAMetrics. The authors expertly address the fact that these two metrics are not adequate and do not cover all aspects of a library's data needs. That is why, in Chapter Four, the authors discuss two of the well-known standardized library surveys, namely LibQUAL+ and LibSat, as data instruments for evaluating library customer satisfaction.

This book may not be on top of your list if you are looking for some in-depth case studies about data mining. This turns out to be the strength of the book since it provides an excellent overview of library data needs, its importance, and what the library can do with data. It would have been better if the authors also discussed the aspect of non-traditional data in particular, data on the use and upkeep of library's information technology. As resources and services move to the digital and virtual realm, budgets for system and technology tools including access to electronic materials are increasing astronomically. More metrics and

instruments of assessment in this area would make a good addition to this book. Overall, this is a must-read for administrators, trustees, and all staff concerned with leveraging data to manage libraries and improve accountability.

Delve, Janet, and David Anderson, (Eds.). *Preserving Complex Digital Objects*. London: Facet Publishing, 2014. 9781856049580. 432 pages. £59.95

Reviewed by **Christal Ferrance** (Instructional Design Librarian, George Mason University) <cferranc@gmu.edu>

Preserving Complex Digital Objects is a collection of essays based on the Jisc funded POCOS (Preservation of Complex Objects Symposia) project in the UK from 2011-2012. Experts from various fields (IT, digital humanities, digital curation, computer game design, art history, computational physics, digital media, computer science, etc.) and from across the globe came together to share their perspectives on preserving software art, gaming environments and virtual worlds, simulations, and visualizations.

Dr. Janet Delve is a principle lecturer in the School of Creative Technologies at the **University of Portsmouth**. She co-leads the Future Proof Computing Group in **CiTECH (Centre for Cultural and Industrial Technologies Research)** and is a member of the **Digital Preservation Coalition**. Her research interests include database archiving, technical environment registries, metadata modeling for digital preservation, data warehousing applied to cultural domains, and the crossover between the history of computing and digital preservation. **David Anderson** is a professor of digital humanities in the School of Creative Technologies at the **University of Portsmouth**. He co-leads the Future Proof Computing Group, is the director of **CiTECH**, and a member of **CCCR (Centre for Cultural and Creative**

continued on page 56

Research). His research interests include data preservation, history of computing and paraconsistent reasoning, and overcoming the inability of computers to deal properly with inconsistent data.

Delve and Anderson organize the book into six areas: why and what to preserve; memory institution/data archival perspective; approaches, practices, and tools; case studies; legal perspective; and pathfinder. This helps the reader gain a sense of not only the complexity of the digital objects but also the roles of responsibility. The book carefully defines what complex digital projects are and why they are important to preserve. It highlights some successes and failures the preservation community has had with these objects in order to establish best practices for future projects. These best practices focus on preserving technical environments, software, hardware, and practice by migration, emulation, exhumation, etc. It also draws attention to issues and problems still not solved such as copyright and other legal issues. The book is an interesting read with a focus on UK and European projects and somewhat lacking in U.S. initiatives. However, it is a well written and a valuable resource for the preservation field.

Tidal, Junior. *Usability and the Mobile Web: A LITA Guide.*
Chicago, IL: ALA Techsource, 2015. 978-0-8389-1301-7.
128 pages. \$65.00.

Reviewed by **Natalie Shults** (Virtual Services Librarian,
Schertz Public Library) <nshults@schertz.com>

I will admit I was a little apprehensive in reviewing this book. As a new MSLIS graduate, I'm thinking that the concept of the mobile Web would be much more suitable for my experienced colleagues to tackle. I'm assuming that this guide would be more useful if I have some familiarity with the topic since most of the technical language might be hard

for me to grasp. However, when I did jump into reading *Usability and the Mobile Web: A LITA Guide*, I found myself immediately at ease as the author, **Junior Tidal** guides the reader through mobile devices, the different apps, how to test their usability, HTML, CSS, and everything in between one might need when developing content for the mobile Web.

Most people (if not all) know what a mobile device is, but **Tidal** explains that there is more to it than **Apple's** iOS versus **Android**. The different screen sizes result in a different experience for the user as well as the resolution and orientation of the device. While this may seem apparent and common knowledge, it adds to the complexity when one is determining how best to present information via the mobile Web. He also points out the differences between mobile devices and desktop machines, particularly the fact that some mobile devices have slower processing power. This can be surprising since we generally regard these smartphones to be miniature computers that are able to match if not exceed their processing power. The first few chapters discuss the advantages and disadvantages for mobile apps, hybrids, and mobile Websites. This helps determine the best choice for your specific library especially in the earlier stages of implementing a usable mobile interface. By getting an idea of the choices you can go with early on in the project, libraries are able to narrow down on a particular route. The rest of the chapters outline the various options necessary to put a project to completion.

If you are a visual learner, **Tidal** provides screenshots and figures that illustrate the steps as well as examples of the processes in action. I personally find these to be particularly helpful for those wishing to make a mobile interface more usable through a user-centered design approach. I also appreciate the author putting in a lot of specifics regarding the steps involved when testing mobile usability. The book concludes with a chapter on gathering data and an appendix with sample scripts and forms that are useful for those wanting to do their own usability tests.

Now that I'm a newly minted Virtual Services Librarian, I find myself not only more confident about where I fit in professionally, but also with the mobile Web if and when our library decides to take the Website in a new direction. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone, techies or not, looking to know more about utilizing the mobile Web. 🐼

Collecting to the Core — The Renaissance: Secular and Sacred

by **Dr. Thomas M. Izbicki** (Associate University Librarian, Research and Instructional Services, Rutgers University; Renaissance Studies Editor, *Resources for College Libraries*) <tizbicki@rci.rutgers.edu>

Column Editor: **Anne Doherty** (*Resources for College Libraries* Project Editor, CHOICE/ACRL) <adoherty@ala-choice.org>

Column Editor's Note: The "Collecting to the Core" column highlights monographic works that are essential to the academic library within a particular discipline, inspired by the *Resources for College Libraries* bibliography (online at <http://www.rclweb.net>). In each essay, subject specialists introduce and explain the classic titles and topics that continue to remain relevant to the undergraduate curriculum and library collection. Disciplinary trends may shift, but some classics never go out of style. — AD

The Renaissance is not a tidy topic. While often reduced to a trope in popular discourse, the Renaissance is a complex and rich scholarly subject that crosses disciplines and contributes to the understanding of Western civilization. The cultural phenomena associated with it emerged in Italy, beginning in the early fourteenth century. **Dante Alighieri** cre-

ated monuments of literature in the vernacular. **Petrarch**, attempting to recover the heritage of classical antiquity, created a periodization dismissive of the intervening Middle or "Dark" Ages that still persists. Interpretation of the Renaissance, especially in its Italian cradle, was largely formed by **Jacob Burckhardt's** 1860 work *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.¹ **Burckhardt** eschewed a traditional political approach for the study of Renaissance culture, especially art, as well as secular aspects of social institutions. This foundational work serves as an early example of cultural history and created a popular image of the Renaissance which has endured. The historical philosopher **Ernst Cassirer** placed the Renaissance at the origins of modern thought in his tome *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, first published in 1927 and translated into English in 1963.² **Cassirer**, together with **Paul Oskar Kristeller** and **John Herman Randall, Jr.**, translated and edited *The Renaissance Phi-*

losophy of Man, which provides primary historical writings by leading thinkers of the time, including **Petrarch**.³ These humanists, most of them professional men of letters, played a key role in the development and interpretation of Renaissance thought. **Kristeller** provides a comprehensive scholarly introduction to the philosophical, literary, theological, and scientific themes that flourished in the Renaissance in his *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*.⁴ Consisting of fourteen essays based on original lectures, this work outlines the development of humanist, Aristotelian, and Platonist ideas.

In addition to these secular explorations, sacred interpretations of the Italian Renaissance have also emerged, proceeding along two different tracks: one emphasizes the continuity of medieval religious traditions; the other focuses on the absorption of earlier Christian sources and the emergence of a new humanist theology. A starting point for the study of traditional reli-

continued on page 58

