Reader's Roundup: Monographic Musings & Reference Reviews

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Reader's Roundup: Monographic Musings & Reference Reviews

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Column Editor's Note: *So this much is clear to me. If you need me to do something that I do not want to do, just reach out to **Katina Strauch** and have her ask me. I seem to be somewhat unable to tell her no....*

*The reason I bring this up is that this column is expanding. It was formerly just the **Monographic Musings** column in **Against the Grain**. But as of now, we have also included reference reviews in this column as well. So, I have decided with this change in focus (or an expanded one), maybe a change in title might be in order. And so, it is with great pleasure that I introduce you to the first **Reader's Roundup** column. Hopefully, each column will feature both library-focused works (in **Monographic Musings**) and reference works (in **Reference Reviews**). I came up with this title to show the combined reviews in a single location, but all I did was get the song "Woody's Roundup" from *Toy Story 2* in my head!*

*Thanks to my great reviewers for getting items for this column. Thanks to **Julie Huskey**, **Jennifer Matthews**, **Katharine Swart**, and my colleague from **Kresge Library Services**, **Sally Ziph**.*

*As a reminder, I have introduced a standard rating reference. Being a big fan of **Ebert** and **Siskel** (may they both rest in peace), I loved the way that they presented a clear way to show if something was worth watching. **Roger Ebert** used four stars (for his newspaper reviews in the **Chicago Sun Times**) to let you know quickly if this is something worth the time and money. So to that end, I have created the **ATG Reviewer Rating** that would be used from book to book. I came up with this rating to reflect our collaborative collections and resource sharing means. I think it helps classify the importance of these books.*

- **I need this book on my nightstand.** (This book is so good, that I want a copy close at hand when I am in bed.)
- **I need this on my desk.** (This book is so valuable, that I want my own copy at my desk that I will share with no one.)
- **I need this in my library.** (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)
- **I need this available somewhere in my shared network.** (I probably do not need this book, but it would be nice to get it with three to five days via my network catalog.)
- **I'll use my money elsewhere.** (Just not sure this is a useful book for my library or my network.)

*If you would like to be a reviewer for **Against the Grain**, please write me at <cseeman@umich.edu>. If you have a book you would like to see reviewed in a future column, please also write me directly.*

Happy reading and be nutty! — CS

Arnhem, Jolanda-Pieta von, Christine Elliott and Marie Rose. *Augmented and Virtual Reality in Libraries.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers (A LITA Guide), 2018. 978-1-5381-0290-9 (Hardback), 248 pages. \$95.00. 978-1-5381-0291-6 (Paperback). \$45.00.

Reviewed by **Sally Ziph** (Business Reference Librarian and Instruction Coordinator, Kresge Library Services, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor)
<sweston@umich.edu>

In both the library field and in higher education (well and everything else), we are continually seeing reference to augmented (AR) and virtual reality (VR). But what does it really mean and what can it really do? This is a question that many librarians have been asking right now. Luckily, there is a guide that can help navigate the reality of these new worlds.

This book provides an introduction to augmented (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies for academic librarians, archivists, and other information professionals. The editors include a variety of case studies meant to illustrate "inexpensive and nontechnical ways to incorporate AR/VR into already existing endeavors." While I wouldn't say the book is "nontechnical" exactly, it does indeed provide inexpensive options for crowd pleasing AR/VR activities, with an emphasis on instruction and outreach.

This book is edited by **Jolanda-Pieta van Arnhem**, a studio librarian at the **College of Charleston Libraries** and coauthor of "Augmented Reality for Discovery and Instruction" for the *Journal of Web Librarianship* and **Christine Elliott** and **Maria Rose**, both of whom are information services librarians at the **Citadel**, the Military College of South Carolina.

Augmented reality (AR) is defined as follows: "In its simplest form, marker AR uses printed markers and software/applications to recognize programmed objects when markers are viewed through a camera." In other words, marked images are superimposed over the viewer's reality. A more sophisticated "markerless" example of AR is the very popular *Pokemon Go*, which uses "distinctive features, (physical edges, corners, textures) in the environment" as markers. Librarians using applications like Layar, Google Goggles, Wikitude, Aurasma, and Blippar can create their own AR content and effects.

Virtual reality (VR), in comparison, "completely immerse(s) the user in a synthetic environment in which the real environment cannot be perceived." The experience is heightened "by adding visual, auditory, and ... touch-based simulation, through means of headsets, earphones and specially designed gloves or controllers." In other words, "AR enhances and VR creates."

Featured AR case studies in the book include the use of Aurasma to create an interactive animated treasure hunt for students, an archives project in which students also used Aurasma to create exhibits for a library display, and the use of Blippar for an actual "Pokemon Go Augmented Reality (AR) Library Orientation." VR projects include the creation of a navigation tool for a campus library system and the use of Video 360 to create a virtual reality library tour that students could explore using headsets.

Whereas VR is "sexy" and gets the attention of the media and administrators alike, I found the AR examples provided in this work to be currently more useful for academic libraries. VR is not quite there yet as a practical choice for library instruction or outreach. For example, one drawback with virtual reality is that the technology can create an unpleasant sensation of vertigo for some users. As one author suggests, VR's uses as a pedagogical tool for libraries are still evolving.

Overall I found the book to be an excellent overview of AR/VR in libraries, especially for instruction and outreach librarians who are interested in creating dynamic experiences and learning objects for students.

ATG Reviewer Rating: *I need this in my library.* (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)

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MacKenzie, Alison and Lindsey Martin. *Developing Digital Scholarship: Emerging Practices in Academic Libraries*. London: Facet Publishing, 2016. 9781783301102, 184 pages. \$49.95.

Reviewed by **Jennifer Matthews** (Collection Strategy Librarian, Rowan University) <matthewsj@rowan.edu>

While the field of Digital Scholarship is one of growing interest, varying approaches from scholar to scholar and differing takes from institution to institution means that one size cannot fit all. With such diversity, it is difficult for libraries to establish one common set of answers as to how digital scholarship should be practiced at their institution. For many in the field the focus is on the skills and relationships that should be developed to make the scholarship flourish.

Recognizing this diversity is one of the key aspects of this work, a collection of ten articles curated by editors **Alison MacKenzie** and **Lindsey Martin**. Both editors hail from **Edge Hill University** (a public university in Ormskirk, England) where **MacKenzie** serves as the Dean of Learning Services and **Martin** is the Assistant Head of Learning Services. They are both quite active within the United Kingdom library community and that reflects in authors who participated in this book — with representation from United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the United States. The case studies provided give a variety of different perspectives, from a beginning center to an established one, on how digital scholarship has been approached across the world.

Of particular note among these chapters is **Tracy C. Bergstrom's** titled, "Digital Scholarship Centres: converging space and expertise." She illustrates an out-of-the box approach that collocates librarians and staff within the digital scholarship center at the **University of Notre Dame, Hesburgh Library**. **Bergstrom** skillfully discusses the issues of skills balance within the center, space usage, and technical infrastructure with a pertinent point made that "a digital scholarship center is perceived as a potential sandbox environment." (109) **Bergstrom** also discusses the need for sustainability and the role that assessment plays to ensure that the center remains relevant to the institution.

Jennifer Bremner's chapter, "Lean in the Library: building capacity by realigning staff and resources" is about using the lean business model approach in academic librarianship. As **Bremner** states, "(l)ean principles are about maximizing value in a process as a customer sees it." (84) Her chapter on modifying library processes through the lens of the customer is intriguing but it lost some of its impact with the over usage of bulleted lists. **Bremner** would present a list then explain that list with another bulleted list which became difficult to read. The lean principles, however, seem to have much value as they could apply towards libraries and digital scholarship centers as one of the measurable conclusions brought about at **Bremner's** library was to "establish and foster distinctive and purposeful partnerships" (101), something that libraries can all strive towards.

I found this book to be of value, particularly for those who may be evaluating (or re-evaluating) establishing a digital scholarship center at their institution.

ATG Reviewer Rating: I need this in my library. (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)

Reese, Terry and Kyle Banerjee. *Building Digital Libraries: a how-to-do-it manual for librarians*. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schumann, 2019. 9780838916353, 249 pages. \$85.

Reviewed by **Jennifer Matthews** (Collection Strategy Librarian, Rowan University) <matthewsj@rowan.edu>

The digital library has encompassed more of the traditional brick and mortar library's footprint these past few decades. Yet, there is still

a wide variety of approaches to, and knowledge of, how a digital library may be built, developed or expanded as these resources become more central to our users. For libraries that may be undertaking the journey towards building a digital library, a resource such as this book is one way to organize collective thoughts around such a project.

This work is described as a 'how-to-do it manual' for building a digital library. Over the course of ten chapters that span the gamut of "should you even build" a digital library to metadata formats to planning for the future, an organization can easily follow the steps laid out by the authors to establish a repository. Since this is a second edition of this work, this edition takes into account cultural heritage organizations and their "desire to create and integrate digital library platforms into their identities." (xi)

This book is co-authored by **Terry Reese, Jr.** and **Kyle Banerjee**, two leading figures in the digital library community. **Terry Reese** is the head of digital initiatives at **The Ohio State University Libraries**. He is the author and creator of **MarcEdit**, a program used by many systems and cataloging librarians everywhere. **Kyle Banerjee** is the Digital Collections and Metadata Librarian at **Oregon Health and Science University**. He has been writing and planning software to support library systems migrations since 1996. With these strong backgrounds, there is little wonder that this work possesses meticulous attention to detail throughout.

One section of interest was about crowd-sourcing. Crowd-sourcing has become more popular in recent years as a way to outsource metadata for collections through volunteer contributors yet, as **Reese** and **Banerjee** point out, there are a number of issues that are often overlooked. For instance, how do you obtain volunteers or ensure quality of the contributions? Through thoughtful discussion the authors help organizations take an idea through all of the pros and cons that they may, or may not, have been aware of previously so that they can make an informed decision.

As someone with good technical knowledge but not deep skills I appreciated the sections throughout the manual such as the one entitled "Facilitating Third-Party Indexing" (179) which explained the difference between indexing methods in a way I could understand yet without so much jargon that I would get lost. I, personally, would not have known that there was such a difference in these indexes discussed otherwise. Another example is the section on metadata formats as the authors patiently explain the difference between the many formats so that an organization can make an informed choice on what will work best for their repository.

The chapter on preparing for the future is also thought provoking. While it discusses the increased move of library services to outsourced vendors it also talks about the history of libraries and what might be learned. Change is another topic that factors prominently. While none of this is surprising, to pull it together in this context and state this is "part of your planning process as well" is different since many organizations only see the immediate "how do we get the doors open" piece.

I believe that this book has value, especially for those planning a digital library for the first time, updating a digital library, or expanding an existing one.

ATG Reviewer Rating: I need this in my library. (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)

Evans, Robert C., editor. *Hamlet*. (Critical Insights series) Ipswich, Massachusetts: Salem Press, 2019. 9781642650266, 298 pages. \$105.00 (hardback)

Reviewed by **Julie Huskey** (Head of Cataloging, Tennessee State University, Nashville, Tenn.) <jhuskey@tnstate.edu>

There is no shortage of scholarship on **William Shakespeare's Hamlet**, but students encountering it outside of lower-level survey courses may wish for supplemental works beyond the usual plot summaries and explanations of whether one should be, or not to be. Like other volumes in the "Critical Insights" series, **Hamlet** provides

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a collection of new essays on a major literary work. **Evans's** volume includes fourteen essays, divided into "Critical contexts" (covering the essential approaches to the play) and "Critical readings" (which includes a broader variety of essays), as well as a few supplemental chapters, such as an annotated bibliography of recent editions of the play. Editor **Robert C. Evans** is the J.B. Young Professor of English at **Auburn University at Montgomery**.

Since *Hamlet* is among the most filmed of **Shakespeare's** plays, adaptations, as well as reactions to them, feature heavily in these essays. Additionally, chapters emphasizing the psychoanalytic approach to the play, not surprisingly, make up most of the remainder of the volume. Two "self-interviews," one with **Evans** and one with the **University of Maryland's Kent Cartwright**, discuss each author's favored approaches to the play, and will be helpful to both those new to serious study of *Hamlet* and to those new to teaching it. The most unusual contribution is **Graham Holderness** and **Bryan Loughrey's** "Hamlet in Helmand," an analysis of the case of British Royal Marines Sergeant **Alexander Blackman**, who was reported to have quoted *Hamlet* as he killed an Afghan insurgent.

All of the major characters are mentioned in multiple chapters, providing the undergraduate with a good start on research, and the generally extensive bibliographies supply leads to other, usually recent, sources. The writing style is surprisingly consistent for a volume with twelve contributors. While it is not an introduction to the play, nor a comprehensive guide to research, this volume provides a worthwhile supplement for readers wishing more extensive study, as well as for undergraduate faculty.

ATG Reviewer Rating: I need this in my library. (I want to be able to get up from my desk and grab this book off the shelf, if it's not checked out.)

Shally-Jensen, Michael, ed. *Critical Survey of Mythology and Folklore: Gods and Goddesses*. Ipswich, MA: Salem Press, 2019. 9781642651164 (eBook), 9781642651157 (hardcover), 1,048 pages. \$295.00.

Reviewed by **Katherine Swart** (Collection Development Librarian, Hekman Library, Calvin University)
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A student comes to the reference desk and asks for information about creation myths. Wouldn't it be great to hand them an encyclopedia that includes a list of myths from around the world, short descriptions of the deities involved, and a little cultural background about where the myths originated? *Critical Survey of Mythology and Folklore: Gods and Goddesses* wants to be that book. Edited by **Michael Shally-Jensen**, a writer and editor with a PhD in cultural anthropology, this two-volume set is the latest in **Salem Press's** *Critical Survey of Mythology and Folklore* series. Previous volumes include *World Mythology*; *Heroes and Heroines*; and *Love, Sexuality, and Desire*.

Organized by world regions, this set ambitiously covers deities from Greece; Rome; Norse, Celtic, and European traditions; the Americas; the Near East; the Far East; India; Egypt; Africa; and the Pacific. The 524 entries (all signed by their authors) include overviews of each culture and its literature; gods and goddesses; sacred places, figures, practices, and text; selected stories; and further reading.

The editor's introduction gives an accessible overview of myth theory, while the set concludes with instructions for teaching mythology in the classroom. Aimed at advanced high school students through college undergraduates, this encyclopedia may confuse younger students when they encounter ancient Greek myths alongside the stories of currently-practiced religions, such as Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. A Muslim student will likely find it puzzling to see the **Prophet Muhammad** (who lived c. 570–632 CE) in the same set as **Zeus**, whose actual existence, I assume, many would debate. Moreover, without the editor's introduction or classroom instruction, a typical reader may not understand the editor's consideration of both universalist and culture-specific myth theory.

As mentioned above, *Gods and Goddesses* accompanies three other books in the *Critical Approaches to Mythology* series. So, a student researching the folklore behind **Disney's** film *Mulan* might consult *Heroes and Heroines*. For if you check the *Gods and Goddesses* index, you won't find the heroine there, except that she is. Neither **Mulan** nor **Mulanishi** are in the index, but **Mulanishi** has an entry in the Far East sacred figures section. Likewise, if you can't remember who was human and who was divine, you'll likely have difficulty finding the figures in *Gods and Goddesses*.

Then, there is the problem of alternative names. **Demeter** is in the index but not **Ceres**. Though, you'll still find **Artemis/Diana** and even the poet **Vergil/Virgil**. The eBook version could certainly help with that issue, except that many gods and goddesses are transliterated into Roman characters and the eBook search function will not retrieve results unless you use the proper diacritics. You won't easily find the Korean myth **Ch'onjiwangbonp'uri** in the eBook, and even a search as simple as "Narayana" will not retrieve **Nārāyaṇa**.

With unfamiliar gods and goddesses, it is typical for an encyclopedia to offer a pronunciation guide. Among the deities of the Americas, the entry for **Chalchiuhtlicue** includes a pronunciation, but look up **Huitzilopochtli**, and you won't see one. That is, until you realize **Huitzilopochtli's** pronunciation was given five pages earlier within the second paragraph of **Chalchiuhtlicue's** entry. Hyperlinks in the eBook might help with that, but there are none.

Reviews of other titles in the series compliment the maps and charts indicating the mythological figures from particular regions. However, this set's "American Indian Nations" map is blurry and doesn't correlate with its chart. For example, the chart lists **Lakota** gods, but the **Lakota** tribe is not shown on the map. Ottawa is nearly illegible on map, but it doesn't matter because the tribe is not on the chart. Looking at the eBook's version of the map is no better, as it is also blurry and flipped sideways.

In addition to the maps, the photo quality is often poor in the hard-copy. A few sections include "Myth into Art" sidebars, but offer no corresponding images. And, the black-and-white picture introducing The Pacific section is both incomprehensible and has neither a caption nor any reference in the text.

It will come as no surprise that I also found a few inconsistencies between entries, irritating typos, and formatting errors both in the hardcopy and replicated in the eBook. I suppose that this is simply not *that* book.

ATG Reviewer Rating: I'll use my money elsewhere. (Just not sure this is a useful book for my library or my network.) 🌳