

SOURCES

contributors. The insightful foreword by the Dalai Lama does a nice job of setting the tone for the encyclopedia. The only respect in which the design of the encyclopedia fails the ideals of scholarly discourse is the omission of cross-references among the articles.

This new encyclopedia has to be compared to *Encyclopedia of Science and Religion* (edited by Wentzel Van Huyssteen; Macmillan Reference USA, 2003). The two works have many similarities (fourteen scholars contributed articles to both), but the earlier work is superior as a reference resource. It is far more comprehensive, with more than four hundred entries, compared to only eighty-six in *Science, Religion, and Society*. It also is designed more as a traditional encyclopedia, with alphabetically arranged (and cross-referenced) entries on all major issues, ideas, and persons related to the subject. The advantages of *Science, Religion, and Society* include its topical arrangement, discursive approach, and the inclusion of more traditions in the discussion, notably those of native peoples. Its editors set out to capture the sort of vital, multidisciplinary discourse about science and religion that they discovered in their faculty reading group, and in this they have succeeded. *Science, Religion, and Society* is suitable for academic and public libraries as well as for high school libraries that support advanced courses on the subject.—*Alistair Morrison, Product Manager, LexisNexis, Bethesda, Maryland, and MLS candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park*

Social Dancing in America: A History and Reference. By Ralph G. Giordano. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2007. 2 vols. acid free \$149.95 (ISBN 0-313-33756-X).

There are two good reasons to buy this book. First, it clearly fills a gap in the existing literature; second, the research that makes up the two volumes is both scholarly and carefully detailed.

Perhaps this reviewer missed something, but upon searching four library catalogs (including that of the New York Public Library's renowned dance collection), I uncovered no similar resource. Historical research comprises the bulk of the work, with descriptions of the origins and survival rates of the most popular social dances from the dawn of the seventeenth century to the twenty-first. Author Ralph Giordano treats such questions as why these dances were popular among Americans, and he addresses the global nature of the influences on this part of our culture, discussing Native American, Caribbean, African, and other contributions that helped give rise to uniquely American dance forms. The work illustrates and illuminates how social dancing paralleled the social, economic, and cultural characteristics of each era.

Along with bibliographies and indexes for both volumes, the reference elements include a select bibliography of on-line dance instruction manuals available from the Library of Congress (volume 1), and a select list of Hollywood movies by type of dance (volume 2).

Social Dancing in America constitutes the most comprehensive examination of the subject available. Comparable

titles are usually much more specific in scope, such as Ann Wagner's *Adversaries of Dance: From the Puritans to the Present* (Univ. of Illinois Pr., 1997), or Linda J. Tomko's *Dancing Class: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Divides in American Dance, 1890–1920* (Indiana Univ. Pr., 1999). Until now, patrons seeking information on social dancing had to discover isolated chapters of more general works on dance history. *Social Dancing in America* is great for public or academic libraries.—*Benedette Palazzola, Assistant Librarian, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*

Sport in Ancient Times. By Nigel B. Crowther. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2007. 208p. alkaline \$49.95 (ISBN 978-0-275-98739-8).

Sport is not only a multimillion dollar business in today's global society, it is an integral part of human culture. The premise in studying the nature of sport is to regard it in anthropological terms—that is, the ideas, ideals, and artifacts that human beings create to perpetuate a culture and to pass on its elements to succeeding generations. It is a rare college or university that does not offer at least a few courses on sports, from marketing and psychology to sociology and history. This book lays the foundation for studying sport within any number of disciplines, exploring the games and competitions of ancient society around the world in order to arrive at an understanding of the forms sports take today.

In *Sport in Ancient Times*, classics scholar Crowther describes how ancient cultures engaged in demonstrations of physical prowess that included games and recreation, competitive contests, and activities that involved skill, martial training, and fitness. More importantly, he looks at *why*. Religious ritual, mock war, social class status, and national identity all figured into the reasons for ancient expressions of sport.

Prefaced by a timeline of ancient civilizations, the book is divided into eighteen chapters, beginning with the Far East and the Middle East, then carrying on through ancient Egypt, the Greek and Roman empires, the Etruscan and Byzantine cultures, and ending with the games of Mesoamerica. A generous number of images of artifacts, sculpture, and manuscripts are included. Through it all, Crowther abstains from easy generalizations, making judicious use of primary resources to arrive at well-considered analyses. Traditionally, students and scholars have considered ancient sports primarily in the light of Greco-Roman civilization, to which the author gives full measure here, especially with regard to the ancient Olympics, chariot races, boxing and wrestling, and the age of gladiators. However, what distinguishes *Sport in Ancient Times* from a rich, growing body of literature examining the heritage of sport is that Crowther also explores the role of women and the place of sport in China, Japan, and the Middle East, areas heretofore given short consideration in sports historiography. Notably, he looks at the widespread engagement in polo-type competitions, in sumo and martial arts, and in foot games similar to modern soccer. In so doing, he creates a synthesis of ancient sport that gives rise to a fresh understanding of this vital human activity.