

Encyclopedia of Africa. Ed. by Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2010. 2 vols. acid free \$295 (ISBN 978-0-19-533770-9).

The *Encyclopedia of Africa*, coedited by Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., at Princeton and Harvard respectively, focuses on issues and topics related specifically to Africa and Africans, in contrast with the aforementioned editors' five-volume epic *Africana* (Oxford, 2005). While *Africana* included topics across the African diasporas, including the African American and Afro-Caribbean experiences, the editors "realized that we could create out of the larger work [*Africana*] a new encyclopedia focused solely on Africa, one that would allow those who were looking for information and insight about the continent to find it in a single source" (ix). In this mission Appiah and Gates have succeeded; while similar resources exist, this encyclopedic set is broad in coverage and scope, as well as editorial authority.

Containing thirteen hundred entries, the *Encyclopedia of Africa* includes some entries with updated and revised information. One example is the entry for "Zimbabwe," which includes an updated paragraph describing the governmental power-sharing agreement reached in February of 2009; another is "Liberia," which has been updated to reflect the 2006 election of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. The "At-A-Glance" feature, which presents data and fast facts for each country, now provides figures based on 2008 estimates, as opposed to *Africana's* 2002 estimates. However, it seems that many topics, particularly those which have not witnessed a significant domestic or international event since the publication of *Africana*, remain unrevised.

The entries themselves are broad and often interdisciplinary in scope, and topics such as "Biogeography of Africa," "Migrancy and African Literature," and "Women Artists, African: An Interpretation" are included. Articles are often prefaced with a brief definition of the topic, which is helpful to readers unfamiliar with the study of Africa, while cross-referenced entries and bibliographic information provided at the end of each article serve to direct readers to additional information. Topics aim towards inclusiveness rather than exhaustive informative content, especially in entries where information could be supplemented with other texts. One such example is the six-page entry on "Architecture and Art in Africa," which begins with a brief overview of the subject across the continent and concludes with a concise description of regional differences related to art and architecture. This article provides an adequate introduction to the topic, especially for a beginning scholar. However, those seeking further information would do well to supplement their reading with a lengthier discussion of the subject, such as John Middleton's entry on "Art" in *Encyclopedia of Africa: South of the Sahara* (Scribner, 1997).

Ancillary materials are also well-represented. The first volume begins with a "List of Maps, Charts, and Tables," although readers will need to use the substantive index at the end of volume 2 to locate the listed maps. Page numbers are

not indicated next to each map or chart title, nor are maps and charts located intuitively near entries of the same name. Also included in the ancillary materials is a chronology of selected events, beginning from 4–2.5 million years BCE and ending with United States President Barack Obama's visit to Africa in 2009. A topical outline of selected entries can be found at the end of volume 2, which, while helpful, would have been more so if located in the beginning of volume 1. Topical entries are followed by a thematically-arranged bibliography, which, while sometimes dated, represents an overview of African scholarship, and would be a good place to direct readers seeking more information.

Despite some limitations, this encyclopedia's scope, editorial authority, and coverage will likely make it a classic in its field. Recommended for all libraries, especially those who may not have purchased *Africana* due to its cost.—Kristin J. Henrich, *Reference and Instruction Librarian, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho*

Encyclopedia of African American Actresses in Film and Television. By Bob McCann. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2010. 453p. \$75 (ISBN 978-0-7864-3790-0).

Brief biographical sketches of 360 African American actresses are arranged in dictionary fashion, beginning with Aaliyah and concluding with the prolific Lillian Yarbo. The author's definition of "actress" extends beyond award-winning and well-known thespians to include B-film stars, women who appeared in only one key film of historic or artistic value, and singers who took an acting part in a film.

Up-and-coming young actresses are included selectively based on the author's estimation of their career potential. "American" includes both black actresses not born in America but who have pursued acting careers in film and television in the United States and expatriate African American actresses whose professional careers have been conducted outside of the United States.

By in large, the *Encyclopedia of African American Actresses in Film and Television* sets out to recognize the achievements of women pioneers in the profession who opened doors and created opportunities for the next generation of actresses or who took roles that helped to redefine the image of black women in film and television as well as to reclaim black actresses ignored, underrated, or forgotten. Not surprisingly, great attention is paid to setting out the careers of those actresses whose work falls between the "Silents" and the 1940s. There are exclusions. Singers who appeared in a singing but not acting role are not included. Adult film actresses are excluded, even if at some time they held a part in a legitimate production.

Actual biographical detail varies greatly from entry to entry with some actresses (for example Krysten Leigh Jones) receiving almost no biographical treatment. Plot summaries of the film or television program in which the actress appeared, as well as details of her particular role in the production, are presented in greater detail than is perhaps necessary. A