

## SOURCES

anthologies to explain Islamic history, religious practices, and society from the ground up is Vincent J. Cornell's *Voices of Islam* (Praeger, 2007). Notwithstanding, the style, organization, and scholarly tone of Cornell's work are different enough to consider the work under review distinctive.

The *Islamic Beliefs, Practices, and Cultures* and *Modern Muslim Societies* volumes are arranged and presented more akin to a high school or lower division college textbook than a traditional reference work. Nonetheless, they are well written, balanced, authoritative, and extremely accessible to the beginning researcher of Islamic culture. The volumes present a full picture of Islam without being too bogged down in specialized language or in depth history that can overwhelm young scholars. One of the more useful aspects of the *Modern Muslim Societies* volume is the coverage of every region in the world populated by Muslims, whether majority or minority. These essays show the diversity of Islam and how widely spread the religion is in the twenty-first century.

Special features in the two volumes are sparse. For example, the two glossaries combined have less than sixty unique entries, rather paltry for six hundred pages of text on a religion with many unfamiliar concepts and terms. Similarly, the further readings sections are lacking in length. The volumes are indexed (noncumulative), which is helpful in navigating the works. Either of these two volumes would be solid acquisitions for high school, community college, or lower division undergraduate collections. However, they would seem more appropriately placed in a nonreference collection.

The *Illustrated Dictionary* is hardly illustrated at all; in fact, the other two volumes of the set make better use of illustrations. The dictionary is too concise, and the odd collection of entries gives the impression that it was an afterthought to the project. Entries for historically significant figures of early Islam appear to have been sacrificed for broader coverage of contemporary athletes, entertainers, and politicians. The authors strive to present the multifaceted history of Islam along with the contemporary Muslim world, no simple task, but in this case the result is uneven and leaves the serious researcher lacking substantive knowledge of the subject matter. Although the editor's stated intention was to focus on contemporary Islam, the extreme bias toward contemporary events and personalities is problematic, whereby nearly half of the dictionary covers only the past century out of over fourteen centuries of history. This volume of the set is not recommended. There are any number of dictionaries on Islam published in the past decade that are superior to this volume.—Brent D. Singleton, *Reference Librarian, California State University, San Bernardino, California*

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***Scientific Exploration and Expeditions: From the Age of Discovery to the Twenty-First Century.*** By Neil A. Hamilton. Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe Reference, 2010. 2 vols. alkaline \$165 (ISBN 978-0-7656-8076-1).

This two-volume set, aimed at middle-school students, provides information on explorers and scientists, as well as

their expeditions and investigations, in eighty articles. Beginning with the "Age of Discovery" (that is, approximately 1420, the time of Prince Henry the Navigator), this set summarizes the most important discoveries in fields from polar exploration and paleontology to African explorers, archeology, and anthropology, covering events up to mid-2009. Both important expeditions and essential discoveries by scientists such as Charles Darwin appear, and explorations on all seven continents are detailed. Other articles furnish surveys of related fields, such as maps and mapmaking, as well as space exploration. Additional overviews summarize the area explorations from the Amazon River to the Gobi Desert, while the major exploratory societies such as the National Geographic Society and the International Polar Year also have entries. Many lesser known people receive good coverage, such as Gertrude Bell (Middle East archeologist), Joseph Banks (botanist with Captain Cook), the Hanbury-Tenisons (ethnographers in Brazil and Indonesia), and Georg Schweinfurth (African explorer).

Articles start with a very short timeline to help place material into context. Black and white illustrations occur sporadically; many are photographs of paintings or "in the field" photos, but most are not well reproduced. Nearly sixty sidebars give capsule histories of related objects such as Cousteau's ship *Calypso*, Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki*, or insight into people or events, for example the Cook-Perry competition to reach the North Pole, the supposed "curse" of King Tut, and the Silk Road into China. Short lists of additional readings, mostly biographies or explorer's journals about specific events as well as a few websites, are provided at the end of each article.

The full contents are located in the front of volume 1, along with the list of available sidebar articles and a topic finder with all material grouped under major headings, while the index is found at the end of volume 2. The introduction contains a long discourse on Columbus, mostly discussing how his discoveries opened up a new age. The author includes two extensive quotes from Columbus's journal here, but Columbus himself does not have an article of his own; rather he is discussed as part of the article on the "Age of Discovery." Data on many prominent people (for example, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark) appear only in larger articles on their particular exploits. But the set should be applauded for its extended coverage, both on modern space exploits and on enhanced numbers of lesser known people in these fields.

Suitable for middle school or public libraries who need updated information in this area.—Marion S. Muskievicz, *Science Librarian, University of Massachusetts Lowell*

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***Trials of the Century: An Encyclopedia of Popular Culture and the Law.*** By Scott P. Johnson. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2010. 2 vols. acid-free \$180 (ISBN 978-1-59884-261-6). E-book available (978-1-59884-262-3), call for pricing.

Five centuries of American "criminal, civil, religious, and political trials" (xvii) are analyzed in this general-interest encyclopedia. Dr. Scott Johnson, a political science professor at