sists of a geographic description, the origin of the city name, and a discussion of its historical, political, and socioeconomic importance in the local area and the wider region. Articles do vary somewhat in content; and relevance, rather than a strict adherence to format, determines any given article's inclusion. A list of further readings follows each entry, and the volume includes basic maps, showing the location of each city included in the text. There is also a glossary of terms, a timeline, and an index, which aids comparative analysis.

There are other works that discuss cities and urbanization, including the *Encyclopedia of Urban Cultures* (Grolier, 2002), *Cities of the World* (Gale, 2002), and Emmanuel Ness's *The Encyclopedia of World Cities* (M. E. Sharpe, 1999). However, this is the sole resource concentrating exclusively on the cities of MENA and on the historical and socio-economic context in which they existed. The concise, yet thorough, articles are lively and well researched. They offer a solid, scholarly introduction to the cities of these regions, and even researchers familiar with MENA will find much of interest. Because a certain amount of basic knowledge about MENA is required before consulting this volume, *Cities of the Middle East and North Africa* is best suited for large public, college, and research libraries. It is highly recommended for these collections.—*Amanda K. Sprochi, Health Sciences Cataloger, J. Otto Lottes Health Sciences Library, The University of Missouri-Columbia*

The Crusades: An Encyclopedia. Ed. by Alan V. Murray. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-Clio, 2006. 4 vols. alkaline $385 (ISBN 1-57607-862-3).

Given the abundance of existing popular and reference works written about the Crusades, any new entry must prove its worth against heavy competition. To that end, the editors of *The Crusades: An Encyclopedia* have created the best reference resource in existence regarding this critical historical event.

The aim of the set is "to reflect the state of knowledge in the crusade movement as it is understood in historical scholarship at the beginning of the twenty-first century" (vol. 1, xxxi). That scholarly approach is reflected in the list of almost 150 well-qualified contributors from around the world, and is evident in the entries themselves, which are written clearly and objectively. Despite the length of this set, there are few wasted words.

The entries are arranged alphabetically. Their scope covers five types of entries as defined by the editor: names of individuals, families and dynasties, anonymous works, places and countries, and subjects. The entries range in length from about a quarter of a page for lesser-known individuals to several pages for important people or topics. As an example of how thorough coverage of certain topics can be, the entry for "Art of Outremer and Cyprus" fills ten pages. Each entry is signed by its author, and is accompanied by a bibliography. Because many source texts are written in languages other than English, information on translations is listed when possible.

With more than one thousand entries, the scope of the encyclopedia may be its greatest strength. It's not surpris-

ing to find entries for the individual Crusades or critical figures such as Urban II, topics that are likely to be studied by many a general student or interested reader. However, it's the inclusion of individuals such as the author Baldric of Dol or the cleric William of Puylaurens—the quieter or less important figures—that separates this set from other works on the Crusades.

Besides an alphabetical list of entries at the front, each volume also includes a cumulative index and general bibliography. The final volume also includes a "Texts and Documents" section that contains documents written at the time regarding the Crusades, as well as some German Crusade songs.

There have been other first-rate recent works on the Crusades. In 2003, Greenwood published Alfred Andrea's excellent single-volume reference work, *Encyclopedia of the Crusades,* and Thomas Madden's updated *New Concise History of the Crusades* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2005) is an impressive general work on the topic. For those libraries looking for a thorough reference work on the topic, however, *The Crusades: An Encyclopedia* is a worthwhile purchase. This set should prove of value in high school, public, and college libraries, both for those new to the topic and those looking to further their knowledge.—*Craig Shufelt, Director, Fort McMurray Public Library, Alberta, Canada*

Encyclopedia of American Civil Liberties. Ed. by Paul Finkelman. New York: Routledge, 2006. 3 vols. alkaline $595 (ISBN 0-415-94342-6).

As editor Paul Finkelman observes in the introduction to *Encyclopedia of American Civil Liberties,* concern with civil liberties has been a part of the nation's history from the time of the first colonists. In a period when the "war on terror" threatens many of our constitutional rights, it is important to be reminded of what a long and rich history these rights have held in the United States. With 1,423 clearly written entries ranging from 250 to six thousand words in length, this three-volume set provides a concise overview of the key issues relating to civil liberties throughout the country's history.

The articles fit into six broad thematic groups: "Biography"; "Cases"; "Historical Overview"; "Legislation, Legislative Action, Statutes, and Acts"; "Organizations and Government Bodies"; and "Themes, Issues, Concepts, and Events"; with cases and themes each making up about a third of the set. Articles are all signed, and each contains a list of references for further reading.

Navigation throughout the set is fairly easy, with multiple points of access to the alphabetically arranged articles. Blind entries throughout the set send users to the correct entry, with "Blue Laws" pointing to "Sunday Closing Cases and Laws," for instance. Alphabetical and thematic lists of entries at the front of each volume make it simple to scan for topics. The index, too, is repeated in each volume, allowing users to take a single book from the shelf without needing to lug around a separate index volume. The tradeoff to this convenience is quite a few additional pages and likely a related increase in cost.

There are some weaknesses to the set. In the index, main

entries are not set off in any way from those in which a topic is merely mentioned in an article. And frequently, topics are not addressed in expected places within the index. For example, the entry for "*Plessy v. Ferguson*" is not indexed under "Race" or "Segregation," though it is indexed under "Separate But Equal doctrine." Though many of the articles have see-also references, these are not applied as often as would be desirable. Most of the entries on the court cases, for example, do not point to articles on related topics.

The most directly comparable work is David Schultz and John R. Vile's *The Encyclopedia of Civil Liberties in America* (Sharpe Reference, 2005). This earlier encyclopedia is written for lower-level undergraduates or high school students. Finkelman's work is pitched to undergraduate and higher level readers. Despite the minor problems and the relatively high price of *Encyclopedia of American Civil Liberties,* the solid and timely information make this is a worthwhile set for most public and academic libraries to acquire.—*Michael Levine-Clark, Collections Librarian, Penrose Library, University of Denver, Colorado*

Encyclopedia of American Opera. By Ken Wlaschin. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2006. 480p. alkaline $95 (ISBN 0-7864-2109-6).

Though the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (Macmillan, 1992) and its updated electronic version as part of *Grove Music Online* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 2001–) remain the central reference sources for opera, Ken Wlaschin's *Encyclopedia of American Opera,* with its focus on American repertoire, serves as a valuable supplement in an area where *Grove* is often lacking. Concerning any opera "written in English by an American-born composer or by a foreign-born composer living and working in the United States" (2), the encyclopedia features entries on the full range of American operas, from the earliest eighteenth-century examples through recent multimedia stage works. Listings for specific operas include a brief overview of plot, historical details of the premiere performance, and, when applicable, basic information on related sound and video recordings. Additionally, the book covers composers, singers, opera companies, popular arias, authors whose works have been adapted as operas, special subjects such as "African American Opera" and "First U.S. Operas on Radio," and entries for each of America's fifty states and the District of Columbia that highlight regional operatic activities.

Beyond opera in the classical tradition, Wlaschin also incorporates several references to Broadway musicals and other musical comedies and operettas, reflecting that though "an opera is recognizably different from a musical," there often is crossover between genres. Because only musicals that have been "sung on stage or recorded by opera singers" (2) are listed, the coverage of musical theater is considerably selective. Given the encyclopedia's decidedly operatic orientation, this approach is logical, but readers interested mainly in musical theater are advised to refer first to Kurt Gänzl's *The Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre* (2nd ed., Schirmer, 2001), which addresses the subject more directly and exhaustively.

By documenting a wide array of interrelated facts, *Encyclopedia of American Opera* accomplishes its purpose. Had Wlaschin included lengthier and more detailed plot synopses for the operas listed, the encyclopedia's usefulness would be even greater, but, as the volume stands, it is a welcome complement to opera reference literature and appropriate for academic libraries supporting music research and performance.—*D. J. Hoek, Head, Northwestern University Music Library, Evanston, Illinois*

Encyclopedia of Digital Government. Ed. by Ari-Veikko Anttiroiko and Matti Malkia. Hershey, Pa.: Idea Group Reference, 2006. 3 vols. acid free $825 (ISBN 1-59140-789-3).

Almost fifteen years into the growth of Web-based, digital government processes, it certainly is time for a work like this one. *Encyclopedia of Digital Government* is a large and impressive effort in terms of scope, harnessing together the most comprehensive, up-to-date collection of key concepts, ideas, policies, and practices of digital government worldwide. The editors commendably chose to make this an inclusive work of international scope; the contributors are subject experts from around the world, although they are primarily, and not unexpectedly, from developed or industrialized countries. (The editors themselves are Finnish.)

Encyclopedia of Digital Government is an outstanding survey of something that touches everyone's lives in some way on a daily basis. The encyclopedia approaches the concept of digital government cross-culturally and surveys government at the international, regional, national, and state levels. Management, public policy, and planning are covered as well, and so too are specific government services that benefit from the growth of information technology and its public policy applications, such as health care, social services, education, law enforcement, and democratization. Although others have focused their published efforts on individual aspects of digital government, there has generally not been such a collective effort before, approaching the subject in an encyclopedic fashion.

The format of each article is consistent throughout, so the reader knows what to expect. Each article has an introduction, background, a major concepts section, future trends, a conclusion, and then a bibliography and key terms. The consistent use of this format makes it easy to maneuver within each essay. The articles and writing are straightforward and informative, but do tend to read like an academic journal.

Two tables of contents, one alphabetical and one that classifies each entry by section and category, provide the access points to the user. The articles appear in the work in alphabetical order by the first word of the title. This results in articles about similar topics being located in different volumes, making it a little cumbersome if you are interested in one particular topic and would prefer to have all the articles on that topic gathered in one place. This problem is demonstrated by the entry titled "From E-Government to E-Democracy in China," which is placed with all the other articles starting with the letter F. At that point, the reader realizes that