

others tackling discrete topics within the religion. This reference set is entirely unique in that it approaches Islam through the lens of the Prophet Muhammad's life and theological and historical place within the religion and wider world. The book contains roughly 170 entries listed alphabetically and there is also a "Guide to Related Topics" section, which groups the entries into subject areas such as "Culture," "Ethics and Philosophy," and "Other Religions and the West." The entries are superbly researched and easy to read, covering topics as far ranging as "Pluralism," "Caliphate and Imamate," "Family," and "Depiction of the Prophet." The latter being a rather timely topic. In fact, there is a longer, related entry titled "Images," delving into iconography of the Prophet.

Other features of the work include a short chronology and an extensive index of more than sixty pages, which together allow the reader to understand the time frame of events being discussed as well as easily locate, people, places, and sub-topics within the work. There is also a bibliography and a very short glossary that seems incomplete at best. For instance, all five pillars of the faith are listed except the first one, *shahada*, or declaration of faith. Another oddity of the encyclopedia is that the Qur'an and *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet) seem to have been arbitrarily mined for material at times. Although interesting and illustrative of the granular nature of Muhammad's influence on all aspects of Islamic life and culture, it is a curious choice to provide entries for "Bandits," "Honeybee," and "Toothbrush," which seem arbitrary and out of place compared to the other headings. A hundred similarly narrow topics might have been explored, why these?

Despite some omissions and peculiarities along the way, this is an important work that provides a rare focused look at the Prophet Muhammad for beginning researchers of Islam. Recommended for all academic libraries.—*Brent D. Singleton, Coordinator for Reference Services, California State University, San Bernardino, California*

Oil: A Cultural and Geographic Encyclopedia of Black Gold. Edited by Xiaobing Li and Michael Molina. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2014. 2 vols. Acid free \$189 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-281-7). Ebook available (978-1-61069-272-4), call for pricing.

In the winter of 2015, as this review is being written, the price of gasoline is plummeting in the United States and what this will mean for the individual, community, and country for the immediate future but also in years to come is unknown. There are a wide range of implications in politics, economics, and international relations as well as effects on what the individual pays for everyday groceries. It is therefore important that libraries provide their communities with the resources that include information and discussion on how energy and its monetary value interact with society.

In *Oil: A Cultural and Geographic Encyclopedia of Black Gold*, editors Xiaobing Li and Michael Molina have gathered

fifteen researchers and academic writers to create a two-volume reference work on "the most important and widely used source of energy in the world" (xiii). Volume 1 has 146 topical entries on key concepts, events, and individuals relevant to petroleum production and consumption while volume 2 provides 79 geographic entries of countries involved in the oil industry. The signed entries (2–4 pages long) are listed alphabetically, complimented by black-and-white photography and completed by individual lists of references. Volume 2 also includes a selected bibliography and a general index.

In their very informative introduction, Li and Molina explain that *Oil* "provides not only the facts but also a new approach to these important questions by examining issues through historical, cultural, geographic, and political perspectives" (xx). It is this new encyclopedia's interdisciplinary approach that makes it such a valuable resource by giving a broader context to oil in human society. As *Oil* takes such a unique and wider perspective on oil production, there is no reference title for comparison, but this reviewer recommends this reference title as a relevant addition to any public or academic library.—*Paul MacLennan, Government Documents Coordinator, CSU–East Bay Library, Hayward, California*

Russia at War: From the Mongol Conquest to Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Beyond. Edited by Timothy C. Dowling. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2014. 2 vols. Acid free \$189 (ISBN: 978-1-59884-947-9). Ebook available (978-1-59884-948-6), call for pricing.

This work joins a growing number of "country at war" titles from the same publisher, including China, Germany, Japan, and Mexico. Dowling, professor of history at Virginia Military Institute and published military history author, has assembled a large international group of authoritative contributors. The encyclopedia "fulfills two important functions: it explicitly serves as a reference for the Russian and Soviet martial past, and it implicitly serves as entrée to a non-English-speaking military culture" (xxxvii). The two volumes contain more than six hundred signed entries. Most average 1–3 pages, although a few run to 10 pages or more. There are numerous black-and-white photos and other illustrations, as well as thirty-three maps distributed throughout the volumes. A brief further-reading list follows each entry, along with "see also" references as needed. The arrangement is well designed. The straight A–Z order is supplemented by an entry title list with page numbers for quick lookups, followed by a guide to related topics that breaks out the contents by broad categories, including "Individuals," "Events," "Ideas, Movements, and Policies," "Organizations," and several others. Closing out volume 2 are a chronology, an extensive bibliography, list of contributors, and detailed index. The bibliography is arranged by historical period, subdivided into major themes (plus general works) under each.

This encyclopedia's chief strength is the breadth of coverage and editorial policies. Time coverage extends from the thirteenth century to the present, and the content