

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

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encompasses numerous topics beyond military history in the narrow sense. Strategic and geopolitical aspects are well covered, and the articles focusing on individuals treat governmental and political leaders as well as military leaders. Considerable emphasis is placed on cultural factors—both within the Russian/Soviet military and more generally—and how these help to explain the strengths and weaknesses in the armed services that have persisted over time. This is all explained very well in the lengthy forward by Bruce Menning, whose erudite discussion of the main themes lends great insight to readers seeking context for topics of interest. The broad subject coverage cited above does not unduly sacrifice depth, since although the articles are not lengthy, they manage to convey the most important material while referring those who want more information to the bibliography and further-reading lists.

This reviewer could locate no comparable works. Ray Bonds' *The Soviet War Machine: An Encyclopedia of Russian Military Equipment and Strategy* (Hamlyn, 1977) is a one-volume, heavily illustrated encyclopedia that, although it does have accompanying explanatory text, mostly focuses on detailed description of hardware and equipment. A very similar work (having some overlapping content with the Bonds title) is Stewart Menauo's *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Strategy, Tactics, and Weapons of Russian Military Power* (St. Martin's, 1980). Both are just short of 250 pages. Beyond being badly outdated, the cultural, historical, and political aspects covered in the Dowling work are only treated in passing. A much more ambitious reference work is found in David R. Jones' *The Military-Naval Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union* (Academic International, 1978–). Its eight volumes feature extensive, in-depth articles, some of which are more than one hundred pages. It is thus deeper but narrower in scope compared to Dowling. Unfortunately, despite taking twenty years (1978–98) to complete the volumes published thus far, no additional volumes seem to have come out since 1998, and that eighth volume had not yet completed the “A” alphabetic entries.

Russia at War sets an example for other publishers and editors to emulate. Strongly recommended for all libraries.—Michael L. Nelson, *Collection Development Librarian, University of Wyoming Libraries, Laramie, Wyoming*

Sweet Treats around the World: An Encyclopedia of Food and Culture. By Timothy G. Roufs and Kathleen S. Roufs. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2014. 623 pages. Acid free. \$100 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-220-5). Ebook available (978-1-61069-221-2).

What do Torments of Love, Lady's Upper Arms, Sigh of a Lima Woman, and Little Spiders have in common? They are all sweet treats featured in this encyclopedia authored by the Roufs. Timothy Roufs is a cultural anthropologist who teaches food-related courses at the University of Minnesota, Duluth while Kathleen Roufs is emeritus director of advising and retention at the same university. The preface states

that the volume “explores this myriad feast of sweets with an emphasis on an anthropological approach that focuses on foods in a holistic, historical, and comparative manner” (xix). The introduction goes into detail about humans' love for sugar, fat, and salt. The types of sugar are described such as fructose, sucrose, and glucose as well as artificial sweeteners such as aspartame and saccharin. The authors outline the history of sugar sources from chocolate to sugarcane to honey. The introduction ends with the prospect of creating sweet treats with a 3-D printer filled with cartridges of marzipan, chocolate, and other pastes.

The book starts out with a list of entries of countries in alphabetical order. Many countries are grouped together by region. For example, Southeast Asia includes Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam while the Horn of Africa is made up of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. After the entries comes an index of recipes for sample sweets from each country or region.

The articles are arranged alphabetically from “Afghanistan” to “West Africa” and range in length from a few paragraphs to several pages. The articles all start with a very brief introduction to the history and facts of the country and end with a list of further readings. The first line to the entry on “Switzerland” is “Milk, Chocolate, Swiss.” The Swiss consume about half of what they produce in chocolate. The word sugar comes from the Indian Sanskrit *sarkara*, meaning gravel or sand. Dates, figs, honey, and nuts are important in Middle Eastern cultures. Fresh fruit is the dessert of choice in most of Africa. Some countries only eat sweets for religious holidays. There is a Thai Dessert Museum in central Thailand that chronicles the seven-hundred-year history of sweet stuff. The reader's mouth will be watering as sweet after sweet is described.

The listing of readings includes articles, books, and websites. Within articles are insets of photographs with captions or terms with definitions. The authors were not able to go into depth about sweets in each country but do a nice job of giving the reader a taste of each country's cultural food.

There are more than two hundred recipes at the end of the volume, followed by an extensive index. A fun read that is appropriate for public libraries and those libraries with food-related collections.—Stacey Marien, *Acquisitions Librarian, American University, Washington, DC*

Women's Rights in the United States: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Issues, Events, and People. Edited by Tiffany K. Wayne. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015. 4 vols. Acid free \$415 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-214-4). Ebook available (978-1-61069-215-1), call for pricing.

I have found *Women's Rights in the United States: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Issues, Events, and People* to be a well-organized, comprehensive, and useful resource. Since Ursuline College is a women-focused institution, the library tends to keep an eye trained on titles on topics like women's rights. Our reference collection includes multiple resources on