

Gun Politics in America: Historical and Modern Documents in Context. By Harry L. Wilson. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 2 vols. Acid free \$189 (ISBN 978-1-4408-3728-9).

Gun Politics in America: Historical and Modern Documents in Context is an affordable two-volume set comprised of eight chapters ranging from the early eighteenth century to President Obama's first term. Each chapter is made up of about fifteen primary source documents covering major periods in firearms and politics in the United States, with 134 sources total. In addition, each chapter has a roughly ten-page introduction that provides an overview of the social and cultural climate of the period covered by the chapter, with the focus on how the period connects with gun control and the politics surrounding firearms. The chapter introductions do an excellent job of connecting themes in gun control such as race relations, crime rates, organized crime, drugs, and other specific issues related to gun control such as the right to self-defense and concealed carrying of firearms. Each primary source document is prefaced by a short, two-to-three-paragraph introduction, which provides the reader with enough information to comprehend the document in both its historical context and connect the document to other major issues within gun politics. For example, the 1938 Federal Firearms Act is identified as the "emergence of the NRA as an important player in the legislative arena" (144). The first volume also provides a chronology of gun control politics in the United States so that readers can quickly track the major events from the late seventeenth century to 2014.

Editor Harry L. Wilson, chair of the Public Affairs Department and director for Institute for Policy and Opinion Research, Roanoke College, does a fine job making the primary source documents relate to major issues in gun control, and his selection of documents is comprehensive without being overwhelming. The documents are also quite varied, ranging from national legislation, local ordinances and laws, court cases, speeches, and important accounts. Wilson also recently released the monograph, *The Triumph of the Gun-Rights Argument: Why the Gun Control Debate is Over* (ABC-CLIO 2016), and in 2007 authored *Guns, Gun Control, and Elections: the Politics and Policy of Firearms* (Rowman and Littlefield).

Gun Politics in America: Historical and Modern Documents in Context is one of several reference works published in the last five years covering gun politics in the United States. Some examples of good works within the past five years are *Gun Control and Gun Rights, 2nd Ed.*, edited by Glenn Utter (Grey House 2011), which is a solid reference work covering a variety of gun related topics. Additionally, *Guns in American Society: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, Culture, and the Law*, 2nd ed, edited by Gregg Lee Carter (ABC-CLIO 2012) is a comprehensive and quality three-volume set that covers most issues related to guns in the United States, for which Harry L. Wilson authored twelve entries and was an editorial board member. The inexpensive single-volume *The*

Gun Debate: What Everyone Needs to Know (Oxford University Press 2014) edited by P. J. Cook and K. A. Goss provides a well-researched, but brief introduction to guns in the United States. What sets *Gun Politics in America: Historical and Modern Documents in Context* apart is the connection between primary source documents, cultural and political context contemporary to the document, as well as the connection to major historical issues in gun control politics. The selection and presentation of the documents allows the reader to fully experience how gun politics has progressed in the past three centuries without losing sight of the history or the present.

Highly recommended for all libraries.—Shannon Pritting, Library Director, SUNY Polytechnic Institute, Utica, New York

ISIS: An Introduction and Guide to the Islamic State. By Brian L. Steed. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 197 pages. Acid free \$58 (ISBN 978-1-4408-4986-2). E-book available (978-1-4408-4987-9), call for pricing.

In the past two years there has been a proliferation of books aimed at educating readers about all aspects of ISIS and its development. While this work falls within this corpus, it is unique in its hybrid reference book format. The first part of the work provides nine sections of topical snapshots such as, "What Is In a Name?: IS, ISIS, ISIL, Da'ash," "The Attraction of ISIS," and "ISIS and the Media." Within some of these sections there are encyclopedic entries arranged topically, for instance under "Leaders of ISIS" four biographies are given. The next part of the work is a typical A-Z encyclopedia of nearly seventy people, places, and ideas associated with the group. The entries are subdivided into sections including, "What is important?" or "Why does it matter?" and "Key events in his life" when discussing people. For subjects covered earlier in the topical portion of the work, there are "see" references back to that section. There is a rather extensive chronology going as far back as fifteen years covering precursor events leading to the declaration of the Islamic State in June 2014. The volume has two maps covering ISIS activity and area of control, but would have been furthered had it included more detailed maps, especially date based maps of growth and decline. There are some areas that could have been explored more, for example, the destruction and looting of antiquities, which is only briefly mentioned despite being highly publicized by the group and covered extensively in Western media. Also, special consideration of the group's exploitation of vulnerable populations such as women, children, and displaced peoples could have been explored in more depth, none are listed in the index.

A book covering events that are still unfolding is always fraught on some level. Case in point, several major events have occurred in the intervening months between the final editing of the book and this review, including the recapture of Fallujah by Iraqi government forces, several notable ISIS planned or inspired terrorist attacks in the Middle East, South Asia, Europe, and the United States, and an attempted coup in Turkey to name a few. Every day that passes, this

work will lose some relevance and currency. Nonetheless, it provides a solid introduction to the major players, events, and ideologies that led to the development of ISIS, its rapid military successes, and the beginning of the group's unraveling. It is recommended for undergraduate serving academic and public libraries.—*Brent D. Singleton, Coordinator for Reference Services, California State University, San Bernardino*

Miracles: An Encyclopedia of People, Places, and Supernatural Events from Antiquity to the Present. Edited by Patrick J. Hayes. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 478 pages. Acid free \$89 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-598-5) E-book available (978-1-61069-599-2), call for pricing.

We live in a world with incredible diversity, and the stated goal of *Miracles: An Encyclopedia of People, Places, and Supernatural Events from Antiquity to the Present* (MEPPSEAP) is “to approach the concept of miracle from different perspectives” (xvii). Specifically, the editor notes ethnic traditions, geographical locations, periods, writings of theologians and philosophers, and modern science as frameworks that are mined for the material included in this one volume reference resource.

Working with eighty-five contributors from a dozen countries with positions in academic settings, different religious training centers, and independent settings, the editor, an archivist for the Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has taken on a large task. Pointing to Ebenezer Cobham Brewer's *A Dictionary of Miracles Imitative, Realistic, and Dogmatic* (Lippincott 1894) as his example, the editor states that “it has been well over a century since the last attempt at assembling a similar volume (xvii).” Hayes admits a kind of “pride of place” for Christianity due to the volume of Christian-related issues covered in MEPPSEAP. He also recognizes a need to look at “how other faiths” see miracles, and this work does provide a wider range of content than the work of Brewer. For MEPPSEAP, outside of Christendom, miracles are discussed as evident in Judaism, Sufism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism.

To provide an initial framework, as discussed further below, the editor's introductory essay includes “Defining Miracles: Theology, Philosophy, Science.” A short history of miracles, and sections on hagiography, people and miracles, and the literature on miracles rounds out the essay. Following the essay an interesting Timeline begins with the Hindu Vedas (ca. 1500–500 BC) and concludes with the canonization of Pope John Paul II.

In the front matter the 204 entry titles are listed both alphabetically and in a topical guide under the broad categories of “Era,” “Geographic Location,” and “Religious Community.” An alphabetic arrangement is also used for the encyclopedia entries which cover a wide range of issues, topics, and phenomena. The collection opens with a general essay “Africa, Miracles in,” and ends by discussing a critic of miracles “Woolston, Thomas.” Understandably, the entries vary in length. A paragraph covers the “Georgetown

Miracles,” and five and a half pages with twenty-four further reading references addresses “Latin America, Miracles in.” Every entry has “further reading,” with “see also” references for some. The sample of entries read by this reviewer were informative, readable and suggestive. A twenty-two-page index, and fifteen-page bibliography are also provided.

In comparison, a recent work with lengthier overview essays by eighteen contributors on key related subjects is *The Cambridge Companion to Miracles*, edited by Graham Twelftree (Cambridge 2011). David Weddle's *Miracles: Wonder and Meaning in World Religions* (New York University Press 2010) is sole-authored.

An example of related coverage in MEPPSEAP and Twelftree is how each presents an opening framework on the meaning of miracles. Hayes introductory essay (noted above) lists a variety of questions, and it looks at reports of miracles with one page describing those performed by Saint Francis Xavier. The essay also considers how miracles function, especially in the Roman Catholic faith, and notes skeptical treatment, for example that of the magician Harry Houdini. In contrast, in Weddle the fourteen-page chapter “What is a Miracle?” authored by philosophy professor David Basinger involves an explication of arguments focused on the meaning of the concept of miracle, with notes and references dominated by recent publications in philosophy. The following fifteen-page chapter looks at “The Meanings of Miracle.” Also, compared to the two-page entry with eight further reading references for “Islam and Miracles” in MEPPSEAP, the essay “Miracles in Islam” in the Twelftree work is fifteen pages with twelve references. Conversely, three pages on Lourdes in MEPPSEAP compare to one sentence in Twelftree, and the range of entry topics in MEPPSEAP is more extensive.

For a different set of critical perspectives potentially relevant to some of the topics covered in MEPPSEAP, readers could consider the *Encyclopedia of Unbelief*, edited by Tom Flynn (Prometheus 2007), for example finding there three entries and further reading for Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. The entry and further reading for “Faith Healing” in Flynn could be also considered next to that for “Healing” in MEPPSEAP.

The editor recognizes that this new encyclopedia is not “a comprehensive guide” (xxviii). His intent is that it can be a ready reference tool. As a basic resource for quick reference this work could be useful for school, public, and academic libraries.—*Paul Fehrmann, Humanities and Social Sciences Librarian, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio*

The Persian Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia. By Mehrdad Kia. Empires of the World. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 2 vols. Acid free \$198 (ISBN 978-1-61069-390-5). E-book available (978-61069-391-2).

This encyclopedia is the first English language reference source to focus exclusively on ancient Iran during the period of its great empires before the arrival of Islam from 700 BCE to 651 CE. The major empires were the Medes, the Achaemenids,