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Anita J. Slack, Editor

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100 Great War Movies: The Real History Behind the Films. By Robert Niemi. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2018. 374 p. Acid-free \$94 (ISBN 978-1-4408-3385-4). E-book Available (978-1-4408-3386-1), call for pricing.

The one hundred films covered by Robert Niemi's *100 Great War Movies: The Real History Behind the Films* were selected using an eclectic array of criteria (the preferences of the author based on his experience as a film teacher, the preferences of his friends and colleagues, and a survey of numerous best-of lists), and the result is of course a rather eclectic collection of entries. Coverage includes famous well-regarded films that most readers will expect to find in a collection such as this: *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *From Here to Eternity*, and *Saving Private Ryan*. But readers will also encounter films with which they may not be as familiar, such as *Merry Christmas*, *Mr. Lawrence* starring David Bowie, and the film adaptation of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*. The films included also cover a wide range of ideological viewpoints: from patriotic World War II-era films to more recent films that take a more skeptical view of warfare.

The aim of the book is "to present a wide sampling of the best of the genre and to provide sufficient background information about how the film came into existence and how it relates to the real history it purports to represent in either broad or very specific terms" (x). Each entry is comprised of the following sections: "Synopsis," "Background," "Production," "Plot Summary," "Reception," and "Reel History Versus Real History." The "Reel History Versus Real History" sections are especially interesting since they provide detailed discussion of how well or how poorly the films reflect the historical events upon which they are based. Not surprisingly, the demands for a marketable story often lead to inaccurate portrayals of people and events. A good example of this is the discussion of the movie *Patton*, in which the author reveals many of George S. Patton's traits and actions the filmmakers ignored in an effort to portray Patton as a sympathetic character.

Niemi does not shy away from criticizing those whose work and ideologies he finds objectionable. This will often lead to insightful discussions such as his observations on John Wayne's role in glamorizing combat despite Wayne's never having served in the military. But Niemi's antipathies can also prompt him to go out of his way to offer debatable opinions, such as his claim that Wayne would have been a poor choice for the starring role in *Patton* because the title character was "markedly more educated and intelligent" than Wayne (243). In his discussion of *Sands of Iwo Jima*, he dismisses Wayne as "rather old" for the role and credits only the screenwriters for making Wayne's character "believably flawed" rather than the "cardboard hero he so often played" (271). Many would no doubt question this dismissive view of Wayne's performance given Wayne's Oscar nomination for the role.

100 Great War Movies is recommended (with the above reservation) for academic and public libraries. Libraries are also encouraged to purchase the comparable work *The Hollywood War Film* by Robert Eberwein (Wiley, 2009), which covers far

fewer films but offers a lengthy historical overview of the war movie genre.—*Edward Whatley, Instruction and Research Librarian, Georgia College & State University, Milledgeville, Georgia*

Artifacts from Ancient Egypt. By Barbara Mendoza. *Daily Life through Artifacts*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2017. 339 p. Acid free \$100 (ISBN 978-1-4408-4400-3). E-book available (978-1-4408-4401-0), call for pricing.

Artifacts from Ancient Egypt, a new title in the Greenwood *Daily Life through Artifacts* series, utilizes objects of daily life from ancient Egypt to illuminate the ways in which material culture reflects the lifeways of the people who produce it. In keeping with the general outline of the series, author Barbara Mendoza, a Berkeley-trained specialist in ancient Egyptian and eastern Mediterranean art and archaeology, has selected 45 pieces that reflect the customs, beliefs, and practices of ancient Egyptians from the earliest Predynastic era (ca. 5000 BCE) through the late Graeco-Roman period (ca. 300 CE). The material culture of ancient Egypt is particularly adapted to this kind of treatment, given its deeply ornamented and symbolic nature, and is an excellent beginner's guide to understanding and interpreting how material culture reflects the society that created it.

In the introduction, Mendoza gives a brief overview of Egyptian historical periods and discusses the limitations and problems of Egyptian historiographic evidence. She then has a section on evaluating artifacts, not just the who, what, where, when, and how of interpretation but also the why: why artifacts are vital to understanding the culture and lives of ancient societies and why their interpretation is so important. Included is a section on Egyptian chronology which is within the standard range of a reasonable low Egyptian chronology.

The artifacts themselves are arranged topically, covering areas such as beauty and clothing; household items and games; literacy and writing; and death and funerary equipment. There is a large black and white photograph of each object being discussed, and each article has an introduction, description, and significance section, as well as a list of further reading. In the "Death and Funerary Equipment" section, for example, a lovely set of alabaster canopic jars from the Twenty-First Dynasty are featured. The introductory section explains the purpose and history of canopic jars. The description section describes the jars, their lids fashioned in the form of gods, and their composition. The significance section explains why canopic jars were important in Egyptian funerary practice and the symbolic meaning of the gods that traditionally decorated them. Additionally, a breakout section gives an excerpt from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, which describes the heart weighing ceremony by the god Thoth, and explains the importance of the heart in Egyptian religious belief. The volume ends with a more extensive bibliography and an index.

This series, and this volume in particular, is a wonderful tool for exposing younger students to primary source

materials and guiding them in their interpretation. As with the other titles in this series, color pictures would have been useful but the photographs of the artifacts are adequate. The choice of some of the translations of ancient texts is a bit puzzling, as there are better and more modern translations available for Egyptian literature. However, while there are thousands of books and articles written about Egyptian material culture, for younger students learning to work with primary materials for the first time this is a very accessible and student-friendly teaching tool. While not sufficient for scholarly research, this is a great resource for secondary and college students, and a good choice for undergraduate archaeology or art history departments.—*Amanda K. Sprochi, Health Sciences Cataloger, The University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri*

American Women Speak: An Encyclopedia and Document Collection of Women's Oratory. By Mary Ellen Snodgrass. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 2 vols. Acid free \$189 (ISBN 978-1-4408-3784-5). E-book available (978-1-44083-785-2), call for pricing.

American Women Speak provides brief biographies and oratorical samples for American women notable for their use of the spoken word from the 1630s through the present. Aside from brief front and back matter, including a subject guide and chronology, the book consists entirely of biographical sketches of the women along with, for most of the women, examples of their oratory. The examples include excerpts from and the full text of speeches, testimonies, and interviews. They cover a wide range of progressive topics, including women's rights, environmentalism, pacifism, and gun control. Only two of the included women are activists for conservative causes.

The title's main weakness is the fact that a speech is not included for each woman profiled. Of the 184 biographies, slightly under one-fourth (43) are not accompanied by any piece of oratory. Undoubtedly, the task of tracking down transcripts or recordings and obtaining reproduction rights for speeches from all 184 women would have been difficult. In addition, including a speech for every woman would have made the text quite lengthy. Nevertheless, in a work specifically created to highlight women's voices, it seemed odd and frustrating that some of those voices were not present.

In addition, when a speech was present, it was sometimes difficult to understand the reason for its inclusion, especially when other speeches were mentioned that seemed more notable. For example, the biography for AIDS activist Mary Fisher describes her speech "A Whisper of AIDS" from the 1992 Republican National Convention as numbering in the "ranks of America's most treasured oratory," yet the speech that follows the biography is an excerpt from Fisher's testimony during a congressional hearing on AIDS legislation (252). There were certainly good reasons for choosing each piece of oratory. However, the title would have been improved significantly with the addition of the explanations for those choices.