Western Kentucky University

From the SelectedWorks of Brian Coutts

March 1, 2015

Best Print Reference 2014

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/brian-coutts/21/
While serving as a brigade surgeon in the Canadian field artillery, John McCrae treated those wounded during the Second Battle of Ypres in spring 1915. After 17 days, and following the funeral of a close friend, he penned his famous poem *In Flanders Fields*, which was published December 8, 1915, in *Punch*. Two years later he succumbed to pneumonia while still serving. A reading of his work was just one of the many tributes offered to commemorate the 2014 centennial of World War I. Perhaps most dramatic was the installation in the moat at the Tower of London of “Blood Swept Landscape and Seas of Red,” consisting of 888,246 ceramic poppies—one for each British military fatality from the conflict.

To help us understand the impact of the “Great War,” ABC-CLIO’s *World War I: The Definitive Encyclopedia and Document Collection* describes in abundant detail the causes, course, and effects of the war, complete with a glossary, chronology, and selective bibliography. Many previously untold stories are now available through letters, diaries, and even photographs posted at Europeana 1914–1918, one of this year’s best websites.

A new terrorist group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) gained notoriety in the West last year after beheading Western journalists. As the war raged in Syria and reignited in Iraq, Ian Barnes’s *Crossroads of War: A Historical Atlas of the Middle East* helped us understand the geography of the conflict.

In the United States, despite incessant campaigning, voter turnout hit an all-time low in the November 2014 midterm elections, in which Republicans took control of the Senate. The explosion of “social media” in politics that began in 2004 was the subject of the *Encyclopedia of Social Media and Politics*.

Riots broke out in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson in August after an unarmed teen named Michael Brown was fatally shot by a police officer. This, along with a similar case on New York’s Staten Island, prompted national
protests demanding an end to excessive use of force by police. It also reminded us that the fight for racial equality continues. The more than 700 entries in *Race and Racism in the United States*, edited by Charles Gallagher and Cameron Lippard for Greenwood, chronicle the history of that ongoing struggle.

Landmark resources

The most celebrated reference event of the year was the August 28 publication of the *Oxford Arabic Dictionary*. Accessible online via subscription and also on mobile and tablet devices, it enables learners to search 333,000 words, phrases, and translations. Arabic news sources called it a “long-awaited and unsurpassed resource” designed to meet the need for Arabic languages skills in the business world, the media, and public life.

Two new editions of reference classics were landmark achievements in 2014. *The Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, the first since 1984 and offering 8,000 entries, provides greatly expanded coverage in areas such as electronic and experimental instruments and the cultural role of instruments worldwide, while the *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, the first since 1998, includes 815 articles from distinguished international scholars.

Everyone seemed to love the new *Penguins: The Ultimate Guide*, written and illustrated by legendary wildlife photographer Tui De Roy, whom the *Wall Street Journal* reviewer noted “has swum, walked and slept amid penguins wherever they can be found,” and *The Bee: A Natural History* by Noah Wilson-Rich, who founded the Best Bees Company in Boston. Both are from Princeton University Press.

*The Atlas of Cities*, also from Princeton, gives us a whole new way of looking at our urban environment, while the reviewer for the *International New York Times* called David Sterling’s *Yucatan: Recipes from a Culinary Expedition* (Univ. of Texas) “part travelogue, part history, part encyclopedia” and newspapers around the country featured his recipes.

To quote the editor of *Brill’s Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, “It has become increasingly apparent as we move further into the twenty-first century that the scholarly reference work, which had become rather unfashionable a generation ago, is now undergoing a renaissance.”

Arts


Readers who peruse this massive compilation of more than 8,000 entries will be struck by the enormous breadth and depth of a seemingly endless variety of instruments, from the Balinese gamelan to the villu of South India. At five volumes, the *DMI* provides greatly expanded coverage over the 1984 first edition. A reviewer wrote that the earlier edition “drives like a dream, its layout a model of clarity.” Among the changes here: aspects of performance are no longer treated in separate articles and lengthy discussions of repertory have been limited. This allows for more space to discuss additional figures such as acousticians, collectors, curators, dealers, and even makers—whose work has enhanced our understanding of instruments in the 21st century. The human body is treated as an instrument in this set, while practical concerns such as conservation, faking, and forgery are addressed. A remarkable achievement.

Business & Economics

Like many other issues, educational improvement involves a “systematic cultural shift.” These and some 279 other topics are explored in this rich new collection from 228 specialists. The material is capably edited by Brewer (New York Univ.), the current president of the Association for Education Finance and Policy, who has written extensively on charter schools and vouchers, and Picus (Univ. of Southern California), author of School Finance, which is now in its fifth edition. A readers guide organizes entries into key themes, ranging from accountability to revenue and aid. All of the hot-button issues from charter schools to Common Core Standards are discussed in detail as are reports and programs such as “Nation at Risk” and “No Child Left Behind.” With some 50 million students attending 100,000 U.S. public schools at a cost of $600 billion, and many more in private institutions, this is an important resource.

Food


Hoffmann is the 2007 World Barista Champion and the owner of Square Mile Coffee Roasters, an award-winning roasting company in London, England. Several years ago, while seeking to find information about coffee from Kalossi, he realized that there were no good reference sources. That all changed when this book, the best ever written about the business, was published on October 6. The material is divided into three sections, with the first describing the tree, fruit, varieties, harvesting, processing, and trade. The second section focuses on brewing techniques, and the final one is a detailed atlas of production with information on individual countries, arranged by continent. Some tips: good coffee needs good water; Starbucks Caramel Macchiato is really a caffe latte stained with caramel syrup; and use bleached white filter papers, not brown. (LJ 12/14)


Sterling founded Los Dos Cooking School in Merida, Mexico, in 2003 after decades of experience in New York City. In the intervening decade, he’s explored the unique cuisine of the peninsula with dozens of Yucatecan and Maya cooks, often in small rustic shelters with wood fires and dirt floors. After a historical introduction with descriptions of the 70 ingredients found in local markets, the book offers some 275 recipes—instructions on how to make everything from appetizers to baked goods and desserts—in standard cookbook format. He discusses the staples of a Yucatecan kitchen—recados, beans, salsas, and lard—and then reviews basic techniques for making tortillas and preparing masa. Describing dishes such as “pavo de monte”—turkey in maize-thickened sauce—and chocolate, the classic Maya beverage, with just a touch of cayenne, this is a collection about which critics everywhere have been waxing ecstatic. The photographs will have your mouth watering, too! (LJ 6/15/14)

General Reference


The Diamond Sutra, one of the key religious books of the sayings of Buddha, was first translated from Sanskrit to Chinese in 401 CE. A copy dated to 868 CE in the British Library is the oldest surviving dated book. But what about cave paintings, Andean khipus (knotted colored cords), recently discovered Guodian Chu slips on bamboo from China, Burmese parabaik (text on palm leaves), and today’s ebooks—are these also “books”? These and other fascinating themes are discussed with beautiful illustrations by Cave, a print historian and librarian, and by Ayad, an editor and picture researcher. (LJ 11/1/14)

In the United States, courthouses are often the places in which couples are married, divorces granted, land registered, lawsuits settled, and births and deaths recorded. It seems appropriate that to celebrate the centennial anniversary of their association, the County Commissioners of Georgia engaged international photographer Greg Newington and historian George Justice (Univ. of North Georgia) to highlight, by region, the courthouses of Georgia’s 159 counties. The result is this beautiful and informative reference source. Regrettably, the 130-year-old Hancock County Courthouse in Sparta was destroyed by fire on August 11.


In the tradition of the famous WPA guides, Orgera, who has a PhD in environmental geography from Louisiana State University (LSU) and recently accepted a position with Monmouth University’s Urban Coast Institute, and Parent, the Russell B. Long Professor of Political Science at LSU, along with some talented contributors, have combined their talents to produce the perfect guide for understanding contemporary Louisiana. They discuss its geography, history, culture, carnival, diet, politics, music and film, arts, architecture, and sports in short engaging chapters with humorous anecdotes. To quote Orgera, “Our state is one that enjoys a larger-than-life image” and for good reason.


Chronicling the history of an institution that goes back thousands of years and an organized profession that dates to the 19th century is no easy task. It requires the skills of a historian and those of a good editor. Certainly, the author, a former editor of Reference Books Bulletin and Booklist Online, is especially well qualified to undertake such a daunting mission. The approximately 300 referenced entries here describe the key players on the world scene, from India’s S.R. Ranganathan, the inventor of the Colon Classification System, to Melvil Dewey, creator of the Dewey Decimal Classification and Library Journal. There are entries on great libraries such as the one at Alexandria, founded by Ptolemy around 300 BCE, and simple catalog cards, whose origins may be playing cards from the French Revolution. A detailed chronology and thematically arranged bibliography make this indispensable for every library.

History


Political scientist Shain (Colgate) here uses documents drawn from the Continental Congresses of 1765 and 1774–77 to shed new light on the contested issues surrounding the years of the American Revolution and our early national history. He concludes based on these writings that the later Declaration was the result of chance occurrences and practical considerations and reflected a society less rebellious and more monarchical inclined.

This pioneering handbook uses new sources, some recently translated into English, to describe the “six dynasties period” or the “period of division and disunion.” It began when Cao Pi deposed the last emperor of the Eastern Han and founded the Wei dynasty in 220 CE and ended when Yang Jian, the founder of the Sui dynasty, reunified China in 589. It covers the conquest of the north by non-Han peoples and the division into northern and southern empires. Topics explored include governing mechanisms, cultural capital, and everyday life.


Despite having the best military forces in the world, some of the most advanced weaponry available, and unparalleled tactical proficiency, Germany still lost both World Wars. Zabecki, a retired U.S. Army major general and 245 contributors describe how Germany’s modern history is, to quote the editor, “military history writ large.” More than 1,000 articles describe 39 conflicts, 145 campaigns, and 247 separate battles. There are 344 profiles of individuals, mostly military but also some key political leaders; 52 articles on strategy; and 16 entries on armaments and equipment.


How America came to be such a gun-toting society is in part described and illustrated in this history of American firearms in the formative 19th century. Drawing on collections of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, where the author is curator, the work traces the development of commercial arms-making from the Kentucky rifle to manufacturers such as Colt, Remington, and Winchester, in terms of design and mass production.


In his foreword, Holger Herwig writes that 74 million young men mobilized for World War I, nine million were killed, and eight million were taken prisoner. Between 20 million and 40 million people died during the Spanish flu pandemic that followed. The war also saw four empires (Austro-Hungarian, German, Ottoman, and Russian) collapse, thousands of widows left destitute with starving children, and millions of youth rendered unemployable when traditional education systems crumbled. To help make sense of it all, award-winning editor Tucker, five associate and assistant editors, and 230 international specialists have written some 1,370 articles on the military aspects of the war (battles, leaders, weapons) but also on the social, political, and cultural facets as well. Roberts has compiled 207 documents about the war, while Dennis Showalter’s excellent historiography of the conflict and Matthew Wayman’s detailed bibliography suggest additional sources.

Humanities


In 1973 the late Josef Ijsewijn met with a group of like-minded scholars in Louvain and founded the International Association of Neo-Latin Studies. He also edited the first Companion to Neo-Latin Studies, which was published in 1977 and revised in 1990 and 1998. This new reference builds on that tradition and with 800,000 words is almost double the size of the last revision. The set is a collective enterprise, with three editors and 80 contributors who have written 70 long articles for a Macropaedia and a series of shorter articles for a Micropaedia. Influenced by the rediscovery of ancient texts, especially Cicero’s letters, Neo-Latin was an attempt to write Latin as it was written by the “best authors of antiquity.” It began to lose its position as a universal language at the end of the 17th century, although it continued to be used in the Catholic Church until 1962.

The 1998 first edition of this encyclopedia was widely praised by most and criticized by a few reviewers. The second edition, also with editor Kelly (Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte), has been revised, expanded, and improved. Its 815 entries, some 250 of which are entirely new, consume 2.9 million words. New entries cover research in science and computing and new artists and movements and give increased attention to non-Western cultural areas. The 670 international contributors from diverse disciplines discuss architects such as Le Corbusier, artistic movements such as Cubism, new art forms such as installation art, and subjects such as body and silence. Based on the Greek word *aesthesis*, meaning “perception or sensation,” this rich resource is to be savored one article at a time.


Organized study of humor dates to 1976, when Anthony Chapman and Hugh Foot hosted the first related conference in Cardiff, Wales. Since then, humor studies have grown and matured into an established field of study. While dominated by psychology, the interdisciplinary field includes specialists in folklore, linguistics, and sociology. This is the first major reference work for the discipline. Editor Attardo (Texas A&M Univ. at Commerce) is a prolific author on the subject and the former editor of *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*. The 213 contributors have written 316 articles on topics as diverse as fools and comic books and as controversial as political cartoons. Complete with a reader’s guide and a first ever synoptic chronology, this is a rich resource. (LJ 9/1/14)

Language & Linguistics


Some 200 years after the construction of the Homestead, in Amherst, MA, where the famous poet lived and worked, Martin (Claremont Graduate Univ.), a leading Dickinson scholar, and 59 contributors including 30 of Martin’s graduate students in a variety of disciplines have collaborated to produce this outstanding work. Born in 1830, Dickinson after the age of 40 spent most of her time at home until her death in 1886. Of her nearly 1,800 untitled and undated poems, few were published during her lifetime. The 200 entries here place her life in the context of her times and explore topics such as religious beliefs, social etiquette, and letter writing but also the Civil War—she mourned the losses on all sides—and even squirrels, which she endowed with human characteristics to explore issues of loss and loneliness.


A Lambda Award finalist for his earlier *The Golden Age of Gay Fiction*, which chronicled the history of gay-themed fiction in the United States from the 1940s to the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, Gunn (English, emeritus, Texas A&M at Kingsville) here focuses on a century of British, Irish, and Commonwealth gay fiction from 1881 to 1981, surveying 254 novels and novellas by 173 authors in which gay and bisexual male characters play a major role. The earliest novel, Jack Saul’s *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains*, appeared in 1881 and describes the adventures of a London male hustler, while the last, Edward Phillips’s *Sunday’s Child*, published in 1981, is narrated by a middle-aged Montreal lawyer who accidentally kills a male hustler and dismembers the body.


Chief editor Arts comments, “When I tell people I am an Arabist, they often look at me like they are waiting for the punch line. Some confuse it with aerobics....” No one could be confused about the utility of this new authoritative English-Arabic/Arabic-English dictionary, with its more than 130,000 words and phrases and 200,000 translations. Featuring 70,000 real-life example phrases and helpful sections of English irregular verbs, conjugations of Arabic
verbs, and full forms of numbers and dates in Arabic, the online edition is fully accessible on mobile and tablet and via specially developed search software. (LJ 11/15/14)


Rist, whose 1996 *Critical Filmography of South American Cinema* drew attention to a largely ignored regional cinema, here describes a growing industry encompassing nine Spanish-speaking countries, Brazil, Guyana, Suriname, and Guyane Française. Entries describe actors; directors; screenwriters, including the contributions of great novelists such as Mario Vargas Llosa of Peru; genres such as Argentina’s tango films; and documentaries and works by new directors including Ecuador’s Sebastian Cordero.

Law & Politics


The growth in the use of social media over the past two decades has been staggering. It’s hard to remember that Stanford University students Larry Page and Sergey Brin developed a search engine known as BackRub (later renamed Google) only in 1996 and that Twitter did not appear until 2006. Editor Harvey (George Washington Univ.) and a large cast of contributors have written some 620 articles describing how social media has changed American politics (after 2004) but also how it has affected world events such as the Arab Spring. (LJ 5/15/14)

Sciences


Building on the work of Auburn zoologist Dusi, who died in 2012, Best (zoology, curator of mammals, Auburn Univ.) here describes the nine orders, 22 families, 51 genera, and 72 species naturally occurring in Alabama, with additional entries on those that are extinct. Beautifully illustrated with distribution maps and color photos, entries on animals ranging from armadillos to red foxes describe size, behavior, distribution, conservation status, and much more. Every state needs a guidebook of this quality.


De Roy, a world-renowned wildlife photographer, and partners Mark Jones and Julie Cornthwaite, who have more than 15 years of penguin observation under their belts, here combine talents to describe all 18 species of the world’s penguins, from the intriguing emperor penguins of Antarctica to the rare yellow-eyed penguins of New Zealand. In section one, De Roy discusses the life cycle of these creatures, which are equipped, she says, with a remarkable array of adaptations to function both on sea, where they spend most of their time, and on land for breeding. Jones and 16 other contributors discuss science and conservation in the second section, while Cornthwaite concludes with penguin natural history in 18 species profiles. A reviewer for *Natural History* wrote, “[F]or those who love these iconic, oddly endearing birds—and who doesn’t?—this book is almost as good as an expedition to see them in the flesh.” (LJ 10/15/14)


Revered as a “woodpecker nut” who’s studied and photographed the birds around the world, Gorman is a naturalist and tour leader based in Budapest who has written prior books *Woodpeckers of Europe* and *The Black Woodpecker*. His chosen species’s distribution is global from sea level to high altitude, though they are most
common in tropical rain forests. Among some of woodpeckers' unusual characteristics, according to the author, are an ability to withstand shock to the skull of 1,200g (humans suffer concussions at under 100g), zygodactyl toe arrangements (two digits pointing forward and backward) that are ideal for climbing head first up vertical tree trunks, and long barbed tongues that can search out insects in cavities. He describes all 239 species, complete with range maps and 750 color photos. Even Woody Woodpecker would be pleased. (LJ 12/14)


If you’ve noticed a circle of mushrooms growing on your lawn it may be Agaricus Campestris and is sometimes called a “fairy ring.” It and 556 other mushrooms located in eight Midwestern states are described here in terms of ecology, cap, pore surface, stem, flesh, odor and taste, spore point, and even microscopic features. Some are edible, such as Leccinum Rugosiceps. Methven is a professor of mycology (Eastern Illinois), while Kuo is the developer of MushroomExpert.com. Since no one knows how many thousands of mushroom species there are, the authors encourage amateur collectors with useful tips for collection and observation.


Wilson-Rich, whom Business Insider calls “America’s Sexiest Bee Scientist,” in 2012 gave a TED Talk about the importance of honey bees in cities and was interviewed by CNN about the “Mysterious Cases of the Disappearing Bees.” He is also the founder of the Best Bees Co., a Boston-based beekeeping service and research organization. In seven intriguing and beautifully illustrated chapters, he and coauthors Kelly Allin, Norman Carreck, and Andrea Quigley discuss evolution, anatomy and biology, society and behavior, bees and humans, beekeeping, kinds of bees, and the challenges faced by the insects. With 35 percent of the global food supply impacted by animal pollinators, declining bee populations should concern us all.

Social Sciences


With Renfrew and Bahn, two of the world’s most celebrated archaeologists as editors, more than 100 regional specialists, nearly 200 maps, and a 654-page index, this is one of the most important publications of the year. The scope of this work, which covers hundreds of thousands of years, is immense. The editors serve it up in manageable portions, beginning with introductions to DNA and languages and then using a geographical arrangement based on the advent of writing. Volume 1 covers Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific; Volume 2 covers east Asia and the Americas; and Volume 3 covers West and Central Asia, Europe, and the Mediterranean. Whether researchers are checking out origins of roots crops in South America or the Champa, a prehistoric kingdom of Cambodia, each of the 107 chapters offers a synopsis of current knowledge on a people or region. Immensely satisfying.


For a generation suffering information overload, statisticians and designers are working on computer technologies and visual techniques that depict data at scales and in forms previously unimaginable. Here D’Efilippo, a multidisciplinary designer who founded Italika Design in London in 2011, and Ball, an award-winning investigative data journalist for the Guardian, examine the 13.8 billion–year history of the world in sections: before humanity, before civilization, before 1900, and the modern area. Consider their depiction of the “Scale of Empires.” The Roman Empire controlled 4.36 percent of the world land and 39.5 percent of its population, while the British Empire ruled 22.63 percent of the world land and 20 percent of its population. “High Times” depicts visually drug use
worldwide; “I’ll Fly Away” plots the 59,000 flights to 6,900 airports across the globe. One of the most visually appealing books of the year.


Editor Paoli’s (criminology, Univ. of Leuven, Belgium) prior books explored *Mafia Brotherhoods* and *The World Heroin Market*. The 39 contributors he gathers here are leading global specialists. The book’s 32 chapters are arranged in four parts that examine concepts, theories, history, and research methods; actors and interactions such as the Italian and Russian Mafias, Mexican drug cartels, and gangs; markets and activities including drug markets, money laundering, and cybercrime; and policies to control organized crime. One of the unintended consequences of the decades-long U.S. war on drugs has been to destabilize several already weak Central American countries, such as Honduras, where 7,000 murders took place last year. It’s easy to see why this was a big seller for Oxford.


A headline in a recent issue of *USA Today* noted that “Police Diversity Lags in Cities.” The percentage of black police is less than half their share of the population, the article explained, which hints at some of the underlying problems facing society today. Edited by two sociologists with a large cast of contributors the set examines the history of race and racism in the United States in some 700 articles discussing civil rights, criminal justice, education, extremist groups, government and politics, housing, immigration, popular culture, race riots, slavery, violence, and war and terrorism. The material is complemented by a chronology and a collection of selected documents. The juxtaposition of the new film *Selma* and the police shooting of teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO, attests to the need for this important reference source. (LJ 10/1/14)

Travel & Geography


Consider these comments from the introduction: “between 1980 and 2010 the number of city dwellers rose by 1.7 billion,” or “metro areas like Mexico City and Sao Paulo have been adding half a million people to their population each year.” To make sense of it all, Knox (Distinguished Professor of Urban Affairs and Planning, Virginia Tech), who’s written seven books on the topic, and 16 equally distinguished international geographers, architects, urban planners, and sociologists describe the four fundamental functions of cities. Decision-making capacity, transformative capacity, mobilizing function, and generative function are addressed in terms of 13 distinct kinds of urban centers, from foundation cities (Rome) to imperial ones (Istanbul); global cities (London, New York); megacities (Mumbai, Cairo) and even celebrity hot spots such as Los Angeles. Along the way the authors visually describe urban farms in the Bronx, NY, and the growing use of apps for rapidly finding information. They even offer a chart of whom our A-list celebs hang out with (other A-list celebs). Endlessly fascinating! (LJ 9/15/14)


Quoting a stanza from an old spiritual, “Joshua fit (fought) the Battle of Jericho and the walls came tumbling down,” as an example, the editors suggest that there’s no unambiguous evidence that such an event occurred. This has compounded the difficulties in creating an atlas for an area in which ancient texts are often partisan and occurrences cannot be determined with certainty. Despite these obstacles Barnes, former head of the history department at the University of Derby and the author of many outstanding historical atlases, and Ruthven, a prolific writer (*Encounters with Islam*) and teacher on Islamic themes, have crafted a very helpful guide to a very confusing part of the world. There are 84 beautifully drawn maps arranged in five sections (Ancient Times, Biblical Interlude, Clash of Faiths, European Intervention, and Technology and Society). Whether describing the Battle of Gaugamela
of 331 BCE in which Alexander defeated Darius or the Six Day War of 1967, the text and maps enhance our understanding of complex events.


Glorious public gardens are bountiful in the Pacific Northwest (Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia). It must be all that rain. The author, an experienced writer of travel guides, plays, and novels whose stories have appeared in the New York Times and National Geographic, has had a longtime interest in gardens and gardening. He describes the 60 best gardens to visit, from the world famous Butchart Gardens of Victoria, founded in 1904 by Jennie Butchart on top of an exhausted limestone quarry, to one of the most selective, the Elisabeth Carey Miller Botanical Garden on Puget Sound in North Seattle, which admits only 500 people a year.

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