

Spring 2016

Jesus in History, Legend, Scripture, and Tradition: A World Encyclopedia [review]

Paul Fehrman

Kent State University - Kent Campus, pfehrman@kent.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.kent.edu/libpubs>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#), and the [Scholarly Publishing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fehrman, Paul (2016). Jesus in History, Legend, Scripture, and Tradition: A World Encyclopedia [review]. *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 55(3), 252-253. doi: [dx.doi.org/10.5860/rusq.55n3.252b](https://doi.org/10.5860/rusq.55n3.252b) Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.kent.edu/libpubs/278>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the University Libraries at Digital Commons @ Kent State University Libraries. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Libraries Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Kent State University Libraries. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kent.edu.

SOURCES

this area. Again, the authors and editors seem to struggle with the “Right to Life” reading list which appears substantial, but looks more at democracy and constitutional law than the actual movement.

The editors clearly state their objective to be “thorough” over “comprehensive” (xx). Although there are some inconsistencies, in many of the entries the editorial goal is achieved with strong, balanced commentary, important connections to primary resources, and additional titles in the area. Therefore, the work as a whole provides a good foundation for high school and lower level undergraduates in gaining a brief overview of key concepts in American history.—*Donna Church, Reference Librarian, Webster University Libraries, St. Louis, Missouri*

Instruments of War: Weapons and Technologies That Have Changed History. By Spencer C. Tucker. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015. 428 p. Acid free. \$89.00. (ISBN 978-1-4408-3654-1). E-Book available (978-1-4408-3655-8), call for pricing.

Experienced reference librarians will immediately recognize the byline of Spencer Tucker, one of our nation’s pre-eminent military historians. Having written or edited more than fifty books covering numerous aspects of this subject, his name on the cover may well be considered an imprimatur of authority and solid scholarship.

This latest tome from his prolific pen is essentially a catalog of weapons in all their deadly and destructive variety. Entries are encyclopedic in nature, giving the researcher a concise yet informative snapshot of the who, what, where, when, and why of everything from the aircraft of World War I to the Yamato-class battleships of the Japanese Navy. Interestingly, Tucker has opted for a chronological arrangement, which has the advantage of showing how weapons have evolved over time. Therefore handheld items such as the club, spear, sword, etc., make up the initial articles, giving way to those regarding mechanical means (crossbow, catapult), through chemical (poison gas), electronic (sonar, radar) and so on, up to the ultimate destructive force of nuclear fission/fusion (atomic and hydrogen bombs, respectively). Tucker discusses the impetus for creating this listing in his Introduction, noting that “Weapons can have a profound impact on society” (xxi), as when the invention of gunpowder spelled the end of the knight and his age of chivalry.

Ever the thoughtful sort, Tucker has provided the reader with a dual table of contents. The first lists the 270 entries chronologically, as they appear in the text, while the next provides the same articles listed alphabetically. The volume is well illustrated with black and white photographs and contains twenty-five sidebar articles that provide additional details, such as how individual weapons altered the strategy and tactics of warfare.

While one might be inclined to think that such a volume as this would make for dreary reading, what with its emphasis on new and better ways of killing off one’s fellow

man, it should be noted that several of the entries concern life-saving technologies adapted for civilian use (penicillin, helmet) or have otherwise made our lives more productive and convenient (telephone, global positioning system).

Overall, this work represents an interesting and informative compendium supported by impeccable scholarship by an acknowledged master of the topic. Therefore this volume is strongly recommended for purchase by all public and academic libraries.—*Michael F. Bemis, Independent Reference Book Reviewer*

Jesus in History, Legend, Scripture, and Tradition: A World Encyclopedia. Edited by Leslie Houlden and Antone Minard. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015. 2 vols. Acid free \$189 (ISBN 978-1-61069-803-0). Ebook available (978-1-61069-804-7) call for pricing.

This encyclopedia is a revision of *Jesus in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Leslie Houlden and published in 2003. The 2003 introduction, included and written by Houlden (then emeritus, Kings College, London), notes an intended focus on “as many aspects as possible of the phenomenon of Jesus” (xxv). The 2015 introduction, written by Minard (Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia) notes intent to respond to “curiosity that comes from the intersection of religion with other avenues of enquiry: science; other religions; or interests in anthropology, comparative religion, folklore, history, literature, and the social sciences.” He also points to a shift in focus towards “interests of a more general American and international audience” (xxxv–xxxvi). The editors observe that “fascination” with Jesus “continues to keep him relevant even as the overall religiosity of the West declines” (xxxvi). There clearly is ongoing interest in Jesus, and there are similar reference resources. Among others, Evan’s four-volume edited work *The Historical Jesus* (Routledge 2004) seeks to show “how study of the historical Jesus took shape, how it has evolved, and where we are today” (2). More recently, another very large four-volume work, *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, edited by Holmen and Porter (Brill 2011), states its aim to serve “not only as a historical encapsulation of the topics” of the past, but as a “worthy expression of the range of viable thought currently available in historical studies” (xvii).

The current volumes have a total of 170 topical entries. The alphabetically arranged content runs from Adoptianism, Alexandrian Theology, and Anabaptists in volume 1 to Wittgenstein, Work, and World War I in volume 2. Topics more specific to Jesus in volume 1 include his death, family, miracles, parables, and teaching; an essay on his resurrection is in volume 2. About sixty entries were dropped from the previous edition, and thirty new were added. Many of those dropped discussed scholars such as Auden, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Harnack, Macquarrie, Meier, Pannenberg, Tillich, and Wright. Others dropped covered Irish, German, French, English, and Chinese Christianity. Buddhism and Hinduism are not included this time, though Islam and Judaism

remain. New entries include “Charismatic Christianity, Deism, Ecumenical Councils, Material Culture, Religion in Television, Saints, Slavery, and Utilitarianism” (vii–xi). Another new feature is a set of “primary documents”; these include “Sayings of Jesus from the Oxyrhynchus Papyri Collection (Fifth-Sixth Centuries CE),” “Pliny the Younger Requests Instructions from Emperor Trajan on How to Deal with Followers of Christ,” and an “Excerpt from Cardinal John Henry Newman’s *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864)” (v).

An alphabetical table of contents is at the beginning of each volume, as is a “Topical list of entries.” The topical listing has sixteen useful categories for grouping entries. A key category is “Jesus: Life and Times” which contains thirty-nine entries (xv). Other categories include “Christianity: Major Forms and Styles,” “Culture,” and “Ethical Topics,” as well as broader themes such as “Power,” “Sexuality,” and “Wealth.” There is a large category “Schools of Thoughts, Thinkers, Movements, and Events” with subsections based on time periods. Another helpful section found at the opening of each volume is entitled “How to use this book.”

The encyclopedia’s entries, which vary in length from two pages to more than fifteen, are academic but also easy to read. This approachable writing is a strong point. The five-page entry for “Resurrection” cites New Testament writings in a general account of the resurrection, then it comments on the event as a continuation and vindication of Jesus’s career, the resurrection in the New Testament world, and interpreting the resurrection. As with all, this entry includes a list for further reading, along with cross references. In comparison, the entry for “The Resurrection of Jesus” in Brill (2011) is twenty-three pages, has footnotes that cite and discuss points from New Testament and non-Biblical sources, but has no cross references.

In addition to the editors, a list of eighty-eight other contributors is included at the back of volume 2, although, unlike the first edition, the titles of contributions for each are not found with the author names in this list. Volume 2 has a nine-page glossary and a fifteen-page index. A fifteen-page general bibliography is also provided, though only two items were more recently published than 2003.

This resource could be valuable for public libraries and for undergraduate collections. Also, those who have the 2003 edition (cloth or ebook) might want the ebook for the new content and for the expanded flexible access possible. Even libraries supporting advanced work may find this a valuable tool for contributions made to dialogues on topics related to the study of Jesus.—*Paul Fehrmann, Subject Librarian for Philosophy, Religion, and the Social Sciences, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio*

The Sage Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence. Ed. by Janet M. Bennett. Los Angeles: Sage Reference, 2015. 2 vols. Acid free \$340 (ISBN 978-1-4522-4428-0).

Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence draws together multiple concepts and theories related to interaction between

groups of people with different cultural identities. As such, a wide range of disciplines and perspectives are represented in the entries, spanning education, healthcare, and the social sciences. What distinguishes these volumes from similar works, such as Jane Jackson’s *Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication* (Routledge 2012) is the broadening of scope beyond verbal communication to include values, ethics, customs, and culture.

Generally, the implicit contrast set is between English-speaking North Americans and other countries and cultures. Most entries are accessible and written in straightforward language with a distinct voice of each writer. As a aid to findability, entries are listed both alphabetically and thematically in a reader’s guide. The 261 entries are classified according to twenty themes such as “Diversity and Inclusion,” “Intercultural Communication,” “Research Paradigms and Research Methods,” and “Values.” These themes are extremely useful as a means of navigating the volumes at a glance, especially when several disciplines are grouped together under one such concept. All entries have reference lists of supplementary readings, and one of the three appendices provides a substantive bibliography of up-to-date intercultural texts.

An advantage of these volumes is that the originators of particular theories were selected to write their own sections, which gives them a particular insight into their subjects. While format is generally consistent across the volumes, individual entries on similar topics (such as “Communicating Across Cultures with People from China,” “Communicating Across Cultures with People from Japan,” and “Communicating Across Cultures with People from India”) may not contain the same subheadings or areas of focus. This makes straightforward comparisons more difficult, though not impossible. Another absence is the lack of biographical material, but individual entries do make reference to important theorists and practitioners in the field. This focus on pragmatics and competence means that biographical material would have to be gleaned from other reference sources.

A potential drawback of the volume is the lack of assessment instruments and tools which might accompany specific entries when useful for practitioners. In all, this makes the volumes valuable as an overview for generalists or beginners, but less suitable for advanced practitioners who will need in-depth materials about a particular culture, its pragmatics, and its norms. If working extensively with a specific population then more detailed information would certainly be needed. Academic libraries which support programs in communications, conflict resolution, international business, psychology, education, and social work will find this a useful set for their collections.—*Erin Pappas- European Languages and Social Sciences Librarian, Georgetown University, Washington, DC*