

Book Reviews

World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services. 3d ed. Ed. Robert Wedgeworth. Chicago: ALA, 1993. xvii, 905p. alk. paper, \$200 (\$180 for ALA members) (ISBN 0-8389-0609-5).

This new edition (the first two were called *ALA World Encyclopedia . . .*) follows the general principles of the earlier versions. Almost 500 articles, many with illustrations and tables, cover three areas: library services in the countries of the world and international organizations, biographies of eminent librarians, and broadly conceived articles on libraries, librarianship, and their relation to society. Most of the biographies and many of the articles on individual countries occupy only a page, but the general articles on librarianship run from two to well over twenty pages.

As in the earlier editions, the overall quality of the contributions is very high, and most are also very readable. The articles on countries typically follow a standard format, but there is much more variety in the general discussions of librarianship. That leaves authors free to choose a method appropriate to the topic, but the inconsistency results in uneven coverage: some articles offer a historical viewpoint, others do not; some include many examples, others are purely theoretical; some refer in detail to the literature, others have only a few references at the end. Good copyediting means that there are remarkably few errors for such a large book, but the list of contributors and the captions to the plates, both probably done at the end of the project, unfortunately received less attention.

Given the original decision to focus on a relatively small number of large topics, it is hard to fault the editor's choices. Future editions will probably discuss

technology more explicitly, but every aspect of the library profession finds some mention here. There is regrettably little discussion of commercial information services, which are increasingly both a facet of library service and an alternative to it. On a more detailed level, the many articles on international organizations do not include the European Community. It has been slow to organize and fund a library policy, but has had a major impact on international information policy.

The most obvious new feature of this edition is the inclusion of articles and sixteen pages of color pictures on five great libraries. The reproductions are excellent and many of the pictures are both attractive and interesting, but it is difficult to see what these few images of three U.S. East Coast and two Western European research libraries add other than a few dollars to an already high price. Like the biographies, the five articles are often interesting examples of library practice, but future editions might sample libraries with more diverse missions and cultural backgrounds.

Pagination is virtually unchanged from the second edition, and there are few other new articles, but a close examination of the text bears out the editor's claim of 70 percent revision. Some articles have new authors and have been completely recast; others show the same organization, but have been updated. "Bibliographic Networking," for example, has small changes in almost every paragraph. The articles on individual countries suggest that updating was done over several years. Most of them seem to have been prepared no later than 1990; some have no references later than the mid-eighties. The editors made a notable effort to deal with recent

political changes, so that "Germany" includes articles on the two separate states and an appendix on events since unification. Affairs in eastern Europe sometimes moved too fast for the editors. The 1986 articles on Yugoslavia and the USSR are reprinted without change, although articles on two Baltic republics and Ukraine did arrive in time to be added.

Indexing has been a concern in all editions of this complex work. The brief descriptions of indexed terms have been dropped in this edition to allow a reduction in index pages together with a slight increase in index terms. Access to the contents of the articles is improved, but still inadequate for many purposes. For example, the index entry "Periodicals" now refers to the article on "Indexing," but still not to the article on "Serials"; NOTIS and OCLC are there, but not the innovative PICA system in "Netherlands"; Enoch Pratt Free Library is missing, although half the article on Joseph Wheeler discusses his work there. Entries that simply duplicate titles of encyclopedia entries might be cut, and replacing the six long lists of countries with a standard reference to those articles would free three to four pages for more index terms.

Despite the title change in this edition, the tension between the ALA and the world as defining elements of the *Encyclopedia* continues. A sampling suggests that the United States and the rest of the world each account for about half the biographical entries. Of the general articles, a very few take an integrated, international approach; others describe the situation in the United States and then briefly survey other countries; still others make no reference to developments outside North America. When other countries are mentioned, they are most often wealthy, English-speaking nations. A major reason for this bias is the choice of authors. With few exceptions (notably "School Libraries," a model for writing about international librarianship), authors from outside North America write only about foreign countries, foreign people, or international organizations, and only one

contributor to a general article is not from an English-speaking country. Difficulties identifying contributors and translation costs undoubtedly played a role in this decision, but a return to the international advisory board of the second edition and some use of volunteer translators (Could ACRL's international sections help?) might make this more truly a world reference work.

The original editions had a thematic as well as an alphabetic approach. A table of contents provided access to articles on each of five broad areas, making it possible to use the work as an introductory reader as well as a reference book. The table of contents is gone in this edition, but many of the articles still seem more appropriate to an introductory anthology. They coexist strangely with the more factually oriented surveys of countries and the biographies. Perhaps ALA should consider dividing *The World Encyclopedia* into three volumes, the country articles, the surveys of libraries and librarianship, and the biographies. That would allow libraries to acquire those volumes that are most important to their mission and would allow a more flexible update schedule. A paperback edition of the thematic articles would be a wonderful addition to the available textbooks for survey courses in library schools.

The World Encyclopedia has been my leisure reading on and off for several months, and it's met Horace's requirement for literature by being both delightful and instructive. As it is, those with a strong interest in international librarianship and information policy or in staff development or support of library school students will find the updated articles useful, but someone looking for a ready-reference work with many articles on individual topics will be disappointed.—James McLean Campbell, *University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.*

Representations, no. 42 (Spring 1993).
"Special Issue: Future Libraries." \$7.50.

This special issue of the journal *Representations*, titled "Future Libraries," con-