

# [reference]

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BACKTALKS

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SHORT TAKES

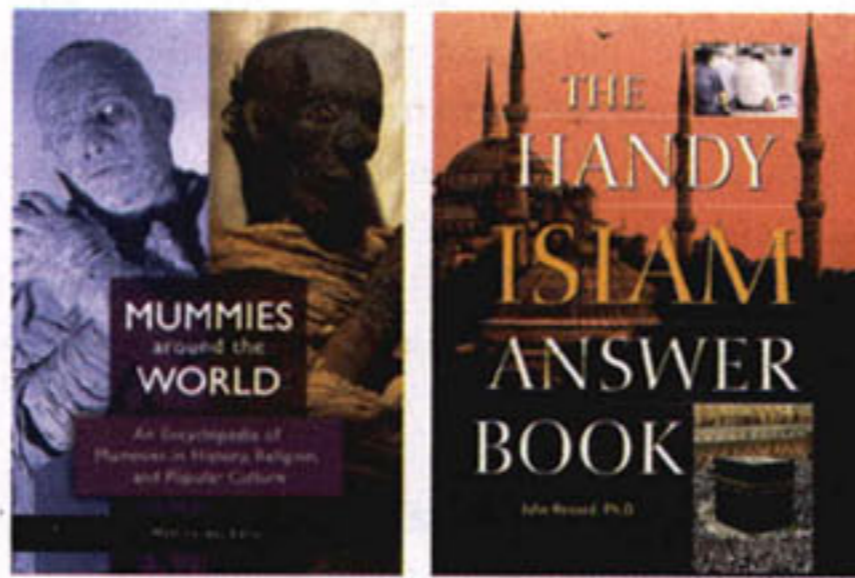
## ATLASES

Narangoa, Li & Robert Cribb. *Historical Atlas of Northeast Asia, 1590–2010: Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia, Eastern Siberia*. Columbia Univ. 2014. 352p. illus. maps. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780231160704. \$150; ebk. ISBN 9780231537162. REF

Northeast Asia is frequently viewed as a periphery region of the great powers that surround it: China, Japan, and Russia. Narangoa (Japanese history and language, Mongolian history, Australian National Univ.; author of numerous scholarly articles on northeast Asia) and Cribb (history, Australian National Univ.; *Imperial Japan and National Identities in Asia, 1895–1945*) have created a work that reveals northeast Asia's raison d'être separate from those great powers and the significance of this region in world history. The authors define their purview as Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia (including Inner Mongolia, an autonomous region in China), and eastern Siberia. Northern China and much of Japan are also included on the maps, but events there are only chronicled if they had an impact on northeast Asia. This work, which spans the past 400 years, is organized chronologically and includes a narrative of significant events along with an accompanying map showing the location of those events. Readers will learn about battles, troop movements, fortifications, migrations, trade routes, religious sites, and much more. This atlas can be consulted for information just like a typical reference book, but the structure and flow also allow for comfortable cover-to-cover reading. **VERDICT** Recommended for students of East Asian history. Appendixes offering beautiful historic maps and a table of place names in Korean, Manchu, Mongolian, Chinese, Russian, and Japanese make the work even more valuable. Readers will come away with a better understanding and appreciation of this diverse and important region.—Joshua Wallace, Ranger Coll., TX

## GENERAL REFERENCE

The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2015. World Almanac. 2014. 1008p. ed. by Sarah Janssen. illus. maps. index. ISBN 9781600571886. \$34.95; pap. ISBN 9781600571909. \$13.99; ebk. ISBN 9781600571893. REF



A rollicking blend of science and pop culture; Muslim beliefs, culture, and philosophy

The old adage “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” applies to the latest edition of this ready-reference classic. The tried-and-true features that have proven valuable to users over the years are here in abundance: statistics, charts, graphics, and tables—even full-color images of world maps and flags. Reports on Ebola and the status of American veterans are timely and informative. Moreover, an overview of 2014 U.S. Congressional elections accompanied by statistical data will be considered gold by political junkies. The detailed, 28-page general index and single-page quick-reference index will help readers navigate seamlessly the 1,000 pages of facts and trivia that are divided among 14 major categories. Although not nearly as comprehensive as Bernan’s *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, the work remains a staple of reference collections because of its convenience, thoroughness, and ease of use. No doubt, most of the information in the almanac can be found using Google or Wikipedia. But it would take hours of online searching to locate the information found in this one-stop resource. In short, this work’s portability and usability are hard to beat. **VERDICT** A source that will continue to have a place for patrons who want to find their data easily and quickly. At the same time, it’s a title that users of all levels can browse happily for hours.—Rob Tench, Old Dominion Univ. Lib., Norfolk, VA

## HISTORY

★Henss, Michael. *The Cultural Monuments of Tibet*. 2 vols. Prestel. 2014. 880p. illus. maps. notes. bibliog. ISBN 9783791351582. \$199. REF

One word comes to mind when examin-

ing this box set on Tibet: monumental—in size, scope, depth, and beauty. Swiss art historian Henss spent more than 25 years and made countless visits to Tibet conducting research, but he also studied and incorporated historical literary sources and material from the West and China into his work. Covering more than 1,400 years of Tibet’s cultural legacy, the book details petroglyphs and stone inscriptions, archaeological objects and sites, major historical (secular and religious) buildings, paintings, images, temple furnishings, and ritual objects. The first volume looks at the Central Tibetan Province of Ü, while the second addresses the southern Tibetan province of Tsang. The book is brought to life through the extraordinary color photos (many historical photographs are also included), architectural drawings, and extensive maps. A chronology of images used is included, as are glossaries of place names and geographic terms; personal and deity names, titles, and schools; Tibetan art and architecture terms; and general terms. Each chapter is followed by an extensive bibliography and notes. **VERDICT** This epic 880-page book on Tibetan history and culture will be in great demand in colleges and universities by scholars and students alike who are interested in Tibet and in Asia generally.—Melissa Aho, Univ. of Minnesota Bio-Medical Lib., Minneapolis

## PERFORMING ARTS

BBC 6 Music. *The Alternative Jukebox: 500 Extraordinary Tracks That Tell a Story of Alternative Music*. Cassell: Sterling. 2014. 304p. photos. index. ISBN 9781844037896. \$24.99. REF

Defining alternative music as “music that is informed by the desire to experiment with ideas and sounds already in existence,” presenters from the BBC Radio 6 Music station list here tracks that have defined and impacted the genre. The 500 tracks are organized by decade from the 1960s through 2010s, after starting with a list of “Fire Starters.” Each entry includes components of the track that make it significant to the genre, along with specifics on the label and release date. Throughout the book, each presenter outlines the criteria used—impact and influence,