

# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Hans M. Zell, Cecile Lomer. *The African Studies Companion: A Resource Guide and Directory*. London: Hans Zell Publishers, 1997. xi + 292 pp. \$85.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-873836-41-5.

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This is a timely reference publication for quick and easy access to current information on African Studies. The expanded and revised version of the 1987 edition of *The African Studies Companion* provides annotated listings of major reference tools, including current bibliographies and continuing sources; journals and magazines; major libraries; publishers with African studies lists; dealers and distributors of African studies materials; the major regional and international organizations (p. xiii). It also gives listings of foundations active in Africa, professional associations, societies, academic and literary awards.

It comprises eleven sections, carefully broken into subsections according to geography and specialization. Section I brings together a large number of key reference tools, primarily written in English, organized from a broad international perspective. The subsection on "general interest" lists, for instance, sources on name origins, a common reference question asked in academic and public libraries. Other noteworthy items include a category on dealers and distributors' catalogues, a list of electronic journals, indicated by a computer symbol, Israel added as a country and cross references to other reference sources for additional information.

With 250+ new entries and a detailed subject index, the *African Studies Companion* provides quick answers to many questions for librarians, scholars and others on African studies bibliography. The compact size and thoughtful structure of this volume makes it aesthetically appealing to users. The substantial revisions of all sections provide a wider range of current sources as well as detailed annotations. These revisions include additions of libraries and organizations from more nations, the inclusion of new services, such as website URLs and e-mail

addresses, new abbreviations, such as OPAC [on-line access catalog] and references to fax numbers and international dialing codes for easy contact of publishers, libraries and organizations. The use of a symbol which indicates information that has not been updated is honest.

The methodology for gathering data using questionnaires is acknowledged for its weakness, response rate and accuracy [Turfan, 1990]. In order to verify and update information, the authors have relied on other publications as well as responses to questionnaires. Bibliographers seeking to develop a collection in African Studies should find this an extremely valuable tool which meet the high standard expected of a Hans Zell publication [Turfan, 1990]. Users of large and small libraries of all types can count on finding this work helpful as a desktop companion for African Studies. The 1989 edition was ranked #1 reference source by *CHOICE*, and this new edition is also an outstanding resource. The expanded and revised version of *The African Studies Companion* has met the challenge to provide details needed by the worlds top research centers and institutions in the African Studies field [Kimble, 1991]. The improvements make it a valuable state of the art reference tool!

Notes:

- [1]. Turfan, Barbara. *Journal of African History*. v31, n3 (August, 1990): 521.
- [2]. Books in Print; OCLC Firstsearch Database on Melvyl System, 1997.
- [3]. Turfan, Ibid.
- [4]. Kimble, Helen. *Journal of Modern African Studies*. v29, n4 (Dec, 1991): 718-720.

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