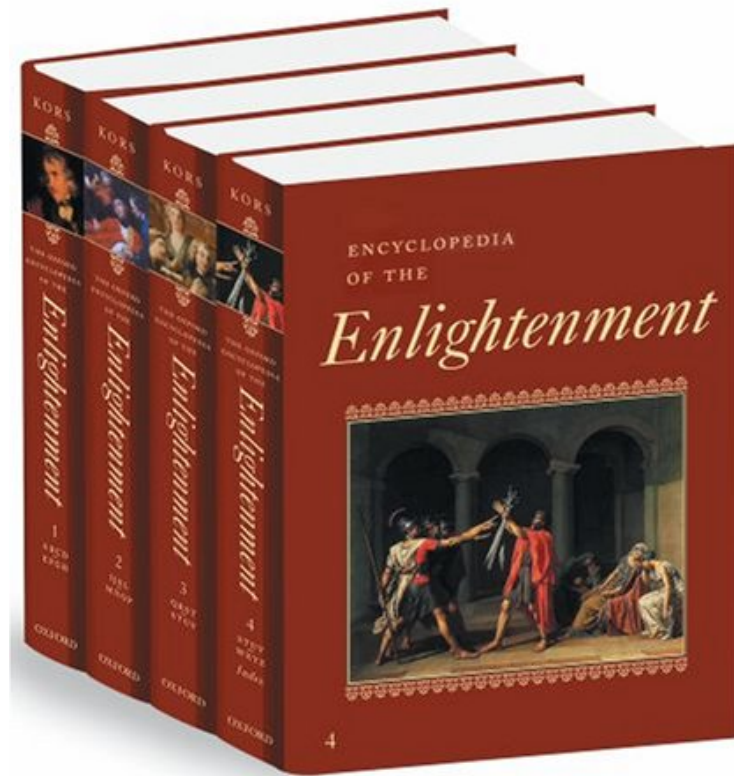


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Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment (4 vol. set)

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From Oxford University Press : Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment (4 vol. set) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment (4 vol. set):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Diderot Would Be Proud By Conceptor To anyone who has learned from him the 1600-year "evolution" of "The Enlightenment", from Aristotle through Newton, Dr. Kors is accepted as THE leading authority on the subject. In private correspondence, Dr. Kors has acknowledged that - while it is clear that all the other stated objectives of this four-volume work are achieved very explicitly and thoroughly - with regard to the objective of describing the influence of The Enlightenment on today's world, the information is not embodied in any single one of the essays; rather, that particular topic is addressed in several ways by at least four different authors. I remain convinced that if Dr. Kors could direct our systems of public education in addressing the epistemologic upheaval that was "The Enlightenment" - and if dissemination of The Enlightenment could regain the ground it has lost to the population explosion of the last 5 decades - we and our progeny would enjoy a much more harmonious and mutually gratifying society. In my opinion, this work deserves to enjoy a prominent place in the library of all serious students of western culture. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. An excellent set By Stephen Hicks, Ph.D. This encyclopedia is outstanding in all respects: comprehensive range of coverage, highly-competent content and

editing, and beautifully produced. It will be useful to scholars and general audiences alike.

Defining the Enlightenment as the "long eighteenth century," the Encyclopedia focuses on the entire range of philosophic and social changes engendered by the Enlightenment. It extends the conventional geographical boundaries of the Enlightenment, covering not only France, England, Scotland, the Low Countries, Italy, English-speaking North America, the German states, and Hapsburg Austria but also Iberian, Ibero-American, Jewish, Russian, and Eastern European cultures. Nor does the Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment limit itself to major centers like Paris in France and Edinburgh in Scotland, but shares the rich lode of recent scholarship on "secondary" and "provincial" centers such as Berlin and Geneva; Philadelphia and Milan. The Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment brings a similar spirit of inclusion to the new theoretical and methodological approaches that have flowered in the humanities during the past two decades. Including feminist and various post-modernist reassessments alongside more traditional perspectives, the four volumes offer the broadest possible range of current knowledge. Accessibility combined with scholarly rigor make the Encyclopedia the first choice for researching any aspect of the Enlightenment.

From Booklist*Starred * As Kors' preface observes, the Enlightenment is "a set of tendencies and developments of European culture from the 1670s to the early nineteenth century (including in the American outposts of that culture)." An encyclopedia that attempts to cover such a span of time and most of western Europe and America is faced with a daunting task. Fortunately, the more than 400 contributors from around the world are up to it, producing a work that will be of use to anyone interested in virtually any topic from this time period. The alphabetically arranged set of just under 700 entries (counting the many subentries, such as the separately authored articles "An Overview" and "Philosophical Legacy" under the main entry Colonialism) has articles running from about a page or so (Defoe, Daniel; Latrobe, Benjamin) to more than 14 pages (Republicanism). Topics include overviews of cities or countries (Milan, Spain) as well as of more general topics such as Moral philosophy, Opera, or Technology. Fully half of the entries are biographical, covering people from all disciplines and countries. Among them are several contemporary figures, such as historians Peter Gay and Jurgen Habermas. One of the longest entries (at more than 12 pages) is the historiographical Enlightenment studies, which describes the conflicts engendered by and the diverse constructions applied to the concept of the Enlightenment over the past 300 years. The encyclopedia itself reflects this diversity by presenting, as the preface states, "a wide range of general and particular contexts, schools of thought, and interpretations." For example, the article Sexuality concludes by noting that "[the Marquis de] Sade's writing marks an important turn, showing pornography as political because it focuses on subjugating women, and as erotic because that subjugation is the source of arousal and sexual performance." On the other hand, the contributors for the entry Pornography state "we believe that Sade was a bad man and a boring writer who deserved his incarceration." The encyclopedia is augmented by more than 200 illustrations (primarily reproductions of engravings or other art), six maps, a topical outline of articles at the beginning of the set, and a superb index at the end. All articles conclude with cross-references to other entries and a bibliography that typically lists primary works, important scholarly works regardless of language, and the most useful studies in English. Many bibliographies include brief annotations. This is the third work published recently that bears the same title. Facts On File's Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment (1996) is a one-volume resource intended for a more general audience. The two-volume Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment edited by Michel Delon (Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001) is a translation of a work originally published in 1997 in France, featuring just over 350 entries from more than 200 contributors, although there are no biographical entries. The recent publication date of the Fitzroy Dearborn set at a price (\$285) just over half that of the Oxford could give many libraries pause before deciding to add the latter to their collections. Academic institutions offering programs in Enlightenment studies could not go wrong with both sets, but Oxford has an edge in that it is not as centered on France. The inclusion of biographical entries likewise gives Oxford an advantage in any larger public or academic libraries that have a need for material in this area. The following is a list of additional recent and recommended reference sources. RBB Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "The most comprehensive resource available about the era that transformed Western Civilization."--Historical Media "An excellent choice for students."--School Library Journal "The definitive reference source for this enormously important epoch."--American Reference "Extremely well timed."--Boston Globe "A valuable guide to the period."--History Magazine "Highly Recommended."--CHOICE "This new work offers the most comprehensive and up-to-date coverage available....Impressive range and currency."--Library Journal [Starred] "The most comprehensive resource available about the era that transformed Western Civilization."--Historical Media "One of the most ambitious and important reference works to be published in recent years."--Reason "This new work offers the most comprehensive and up-to-date coverage available....Impressive range and currency."--Library Journal [Starred] About the Author Alan Charles Kors is at University of Pennsylvania.