

### Book Reviews

T. F. CARNEY, *The shape of the past: models and Antiquity*, Lawrence, Kansas, Coronado Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xxiv, 386, illus., \$20.00.

The author's aim is to elucidate the nature and function of models. They help to organize masses of information, improve techniques of reasoning, allow understanding of data broken up by disciplines, and confer mental agility by permitting switching modes of thinking. His book, after describing and discussing models in detail, explores the application of them to history, in this case the period from Sumer to Byzantium. There are cross-cultural models, which can be employed in topics such as the politics of bureaucrats, and city life, "economics", and the military society in Antiquity. Postulated models are illustrated by Emperor Claudius and the grain trade, and analytical ones are used to compare societies in Antiquity. Plentiful footnotes, diagrams, appendices, and a bibliography are provided.

With the methods employed one certainly is shown a more representative picture of society in Antiquity, and some of the other benefits derived from models enumerated above became apparent. In addition a survey of the historical period reviewed is also provided. The author claims that his book is related to a textbook as a tin-opener is to a tin can, and it certainly provides ample elucidation. Whether the techniques can be applied to the history of medicine and of science remains to be seen.

J. L. CLOUDSLEY-THOMPSON, *Insects and history*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976, 8vo, pp. [xii], 242, illus., £8.50.

Professor Cloudsley-Thompson, a zoologist, attempts to survey all the main epidemics of insect-spread diseases that have afflicted man and thus influenced his destiny and the course of history. He gives excellent descriptions of the culprits, but he is much less successful when it comes to their role in history. On the whole, his knowledge of history, and the history of medicine in particular, is defective and there is naïvety, unwarranted assumptions about past diseases, and uncritical citing of outworn opinions now open to doubt. Judgements on the past are also made, and some of his topics such as scurvy, famine, and hysteria have little connexion with insects.

Without being aware of these basic defects the reader can be misled. The documentation is rudimentary, which is a pity in view of the large amount of information the author has assembled; thus, none of the too-numerous quotations is referenced. Although the book will no doubt entertain, and in parts horrify, it can only be recommended to the cautious and critical student.

FREDERICK SMITH, *The early history of veterinary literature and its British development*, 4 vols., reprinted, London, J. A. Allen, 1976, 8vo, pp. iv, 373; viii, 244; vii, 184; xxiv, 161, illus., [no price stated].

Major-General Sir Frederick Smith (1857–1929) began in 1912 to publish his history serially in journals. Meantime they were gathered into three volumes (1919, 1924, 1930), a fourth (1933) being edited by F. Bullock. Together they extend "from the earliest period" to 1860 and the contents are a chronological account of important writers, arranged according to the date when their first published work appeared. Each book or pamphlet is described, but unlike a bibliography there is more