

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

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information concerning the contents and author rather than the publication *per se*. Together it provides a unique survey, the like of which is not available in the history of medicine. The last three volumes deal exclusively with British authors, many of whom practised medicine and in some cases are better known as medical practitioners than as veterinarians.

In view of its value as a source-book, and despite the fact that the bibliographical detail is not always trustworthy, the publishers are to be commended for producing a reprint of it. The fact that it is of elegant workmanship is also to their credit.

EVA CRANE (editor), *Honey. A comprehensive survey*, London, Heinemann, 1976, 8vo, pp. xvi, 608, illus., £15.00.

The editor is Director of the International Bee Research Association and is one of the most renowned apiculturists in the world. Together with twelve colleagues, who are also international experts, she has produced a remarkably comprehensive survey of information on honey. The sixty-eight-paged bibliography, with more references in the text, indicates its scholarly nature and encyclopaedic character. There are sections on honey production, the characteristics of honey, its preparation for the market, and honey as a commercial product, but historians of medicine and biology will be especially interested in the last two chapters. In 'The language of honey' (pp. 426–438) the origins of "honey" and associated words are discussed in a detailed but readily comprehensible manner. The last chapter, 'History of honey' (pp. 439–488) is by Dr. Crane, who surveys honey since before the appearance of man, a topic that has been little explored, to modern honey production from 1900 onwards. Although she at times reveals historical naïvety, her account is accurate and one of the best short ones available.

The book is well illustrated and the indexes are excellent. It can be warmly recommended as an outstanding work, which will remain for some time a standard treatise on all aspects of honey, including its history and philology.

K. C. CHANG (editor), *Food in Chinese culture. Anthropological and historical perspectives*, New Haven, Conn., and London, Yale University Press, 1977, 8vo, pp. ix, 429, illus., £14.40.

In few countries is food allied so closely to culture as in China, and Professor Chang's book aims to provide for the first time in English an anthropological study of this tradition by analysing a culture through its eating habits. Not only are the foodstuffs themselves described in great detail, but also the unique methods of producing, preserving, preparing, serving, and eating them, and their effects upon society. The approach is chronological, ranging from ancient to modern China, each of the eight collaborators contributing a chapter on a historical period; the last two deal with modern China, north and south. The amount of data is at times overwhelming, especially when foods are described without interpretation. But the most interesting aspects of the book are the discussions of factors influencing cooking of food, such as religion, the importation of foreign commodities, economic and social development, military operations, technology, the absence of taboos, the moral and magical rules of daily existence, amongst others. The role of food sym-