

Book Reviews

As a summary of the history of a subject of ever-increasing importance today, this book can be recommended. Dr. Coley brings his narrative up to date, with a terminal chapter on "some techniques of modern biochemistry" and a peep into the future. His book will, therefore, prove useful to the practising biochemist as well as to those more professionally concerned with the history of the subject. Another, and important, attraction to the student is the relatively modest price.

CARMEN BLACKER and MICHAEL LOWE (editors), *Ancient cosmologies*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1975, 8vo, pp. 270, illus., £5.95.

A great deal has been written on how individual ancient civilizations have imagined the universe was shaped, but never before have these early notions been collected together. In this excellent book nine outstanding scholars have contributed essays on the cosmological concepts of ancient peoples; eight of them are based on lectures delivered in Cambridge University in 1972. The names of the authors alone indicate the very high level of scholarship and authority achieved: J. M. Plumley on Ancient Egypt; W. G. Lambert on Sumer and Babylon; Louis Jacobs on Jewish cosmology; J. Needham on that of early China; R. F. Gombrich on Ancient Indian; Edith Jachimowicz on Islamic; H. R. Ellis Davidson on Scandinavian; G. E. R. Lloyd on Greek; and finally Philip Grierson discusses the double heritage medieval Europe derived from the Greek and Jewish cosmological traditions.

Each community was faced by the same questions. How were the earth and heavenly bodies located? What arrangements were made for the accommodation of the dead, in a heaven or hell? How were the gods and demons provided for? With very scanty knowledge of astronomy and geography they tackled these fundamental problems differently, and to be able in one book to compare and contrast the remarkable range of answers is one of the volume's several noteworthy attributes. Moreover, it is well produced with thirty-four illustrations altogether, and in view of this and the high quality of the text, the price is modest.

It is an essential work for all who are studying the history of medicine or science in the ancient world, and it can be recommended unhesitatingly. It helps to provide the background needed by the historian of special aspects of early civilizations, without which his studies and products are rendered shallow and worthless. No doubt, it will become a classic, enjoyable and informative to read, and full of accurate data and documentation for reference purposes.

RENÉE C. FOX and JUDITH P. SWAZEY, *The courage to fail. A social view of organ transplants and dialysis*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1974, 8vo, pp. xviii, 395, illus., £7.80.

Modern techniques of transplantation and dialysis have generated a series of social and ethical problems, and it is with these that the authors, a sociologist and an historian of science, are involved, using a case study and historical method of presentation and extending up to 1970. They bring to bear on their biological, clinical and social data a social scientific perspective which affords new insights into biomedical research. They examine the "gift-exchange" aspects of transplantation as it affects