

Book Reviews

DEREK PARKER, *Familiar to all. William Lilly and astrology in the seventeenth century*, London, J. Cape, 1975, 8vo, pp. 272, illus., £5.50.

The author, who apparently is a well-known writer, broadcaster, and supporter of astrology, claims by way of the dust-jacket that, “. . . Until recently no serious historian had given any attention to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century astrologers, despite the enormous influence they had on their time. . . .”

One's first comment is that, in fact, there is a considerable scholarly literature on this important topic in several European countries, as well as in the American colonies.

Second, one must assume that the present author considers himself to be a “serious historian”. He has certainly presented a well-written, and “extensively researched” biography of William Lilly (1602–1681), again as the dust-jacket puts it. Unfortunately as is often the case with books like this, documentation of the research is withheld from us. Thus there is no indication where much of the material has been discovered, and the lengthy quotations of which there are many, perhaps too many, carry no information as to their precise origins. Moreover, on the whole, Lilly's autobiography, upon which the author in part relies, is usually considered to be much too inaccurate for use, even when cross-checking is employed. The list of sources includes thirty-eight titles, only one of which has “astrology” in its title. Thus, virtually all of the secondary historical material, much of which contains references to Lilly, appears to have been omitted. This book, therefore, makes entertaining reading, but it is not a serious contribution to scholarship. It is also curious that the recent and impressive evidence in favour of certain aspects of astrology brought forward by Michel Gauquelin (see *Med. Hist.*, 1975, 19: 211) does not seem to be cited.

R. C. STAUFFER, *Charles Darwin's natural selection, being the second part of his big species book written from 1856 to 1858*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975, 8vo, pp. xii, 692, illus., £20.00.

Darwin's original plan was to publish a large volume with abundant examples to illustrate his argument and a comprehensive bibliography of sources. As is well known, Wallace's letter changed all this, and in a period of eight months Darwin produced *On the origin of species*, which was merely an abstract of the lengthy manuscript he had prepared. Some of the latter went towards his *Variations of animals and plants under domestication*, and the remainder is published here, thanks to the tireless endeavour of Professor Stauffer of the University of Wisconsin, who has transcribed the manuscript and provided cross-references to the *Origin* and a collated bibliography.

Now at last the tantalizing absence of footnotes in the *Origin* has been obviated, for Darwin scholars are provided with a most useful research tool which will reveal the references and authorities supporting statements.

The author also discusses the history of the manuscript, Darwin's “big species book”, and includes an account of his methods of writing and editing, which give additional insight into the publications of Darwin.

Professor Stauffer's book will be welcomed by all those working in the field of evolutionary theory and by historians of nineteenth-century biology. By means of it the origins of the *Origin* are revealed.