

**The Medieval Health Handbook: Tacuinum Sanitatis.**

Braziller. 1976. 153p. intro. by Luisa Cogliati Arano. tr. by Oscar Ratti & Adele Westbrook. illus., some color. bibliog. LC 75-21725. ISBN 0-8076-0808-4. slipcased. \$25. HIST

Pictures of daily life in the Middle Ages and accompanying texts describing the use of plants to regulate health are effectively presented in this handsome volume. Almost 300 finely reproduced plates (48 color, 243 black-and-white) from five manuscript versions of the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* provide vignettes of such activities as gathering bees, purchasing olive oil, catching partridges, and harvesting rye. The 45-page introductory essay, with its scholarly discussion of the provenance of the manuscripts, will appeal almost exclusively to art historians. That audience will also value this volume as the first to reproduce the entire contents of the Liege and Rouen manuscripts. The remaining pages will charm a more general audience, especially those expressing contemporary enthusiasms for the medieval period, "back to nature" diets, and herbal medicine. The book makes available otherwise inaccessible material and provides an all-too-rare opportunity to see the medieval mind at work through words and pictures.—*Lorna J. Sass, Dept. of English, Queens Coll., CUNY*

**Persico, Joseph E. My Enemy, My Brother: men and days of Gettysburg.**

Grossman: Viking. Feb. 1977. 228p. photogs. maps. bibliog. ISBN 0-670-49861-0. \$12.95. HIST

This vivid, absorbing, action-packed narrative of the greatest battle ever fought in North America practically transports the reader onto the scene, causing sweating palms and a sense of danger and animation. Some of the earthy prose is perhaps a little too crude, and is definitely not for the squeamish. Persico did admirable research in printed sources, and although he then took literary license to dramatize some of the events, it is very likely that the "re-created" eyewitness experiences did occur at one time or another. Above all, one does get a rather good idea of what the battle was like.—*Herman Hattaway, Dept. of History, Univ. of Missouri, Kansas City*

**Reid, William. Arms Through the Ages.**

Harper. 1976. 280p. illus. bibliog. index. LC 76-10105. ISBN 0-06-013527-1. \$35; until Dec. 31, \$29.95. TECH/HIST

A scholarly and thoughtful study of the development of weapons and armor from the time of the Lower Paleolithic Age to the advent of the atomic bomb. Reid traces the evolution and the manner in which various weapons were used, with descriptions of personalities, battles, and fortifications. The plates are not only well drawn, but arranged in a way that avoids the annoying gymnastics of flipping back and forth through the pages. This is not, however, just another picture book of weapons. Although making no pretense at being a detailed account of weapons development, the work is comprehensive enough to serve in most reference areas. Highly recommended.—*George F. Scheck, SUNY at Oswego Lib.*

**Samora, Julian & Patricia Vandel Simon. A History of the Mexican-American People.**

Univ. of Notre Dame Pr. 1976. 256p. \$9.95; pap. \$5.95. HIST

To correct and amplify standard American textbooks, Samora and Simon have written a straightforward, objective account of the Mexican-American role in U.S. history. Their book is a careful overview which begins with the arrival of the Spanish in the New World and then goes on to focus on Mexico's history, its interaction with the U.S., and developments in the Southwest through the early 1970's. It also briefly explores the too-frequently ignored areas of Chicano literature, music, and art. Although this is one of the most complete histories now available, the authors' pedestrian style keeps the narrative at a less-than-lively level. References at the end of each chapter are useful for further study but it is unlikely that many readers will be so inspired.—*Susan Jones, formerly with Blue Island P.L., Ill.*

**Shapiro, Theda. Painters and Politics: the European avant-garde and society, 1900-1925.**

Elsevier. 1976. 322p. illus. bibliog. index. LC 75-20954. ISBN 0-444-99012-7. \$13.50. ART/HIST

A brilliant scholarly study of the relationship between the avant-garde artists and art movements of the early 20th Century, such as Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism, and the political ideologies of socialism, anarchism, and communism. This work examines the political opinions and activities of 80 revolutionary artists, including Severini, Klee, Kirchner, Boccioni, Kandinsky, Duchamp, and Arp, in order to determine their role in the revolutionary social changes of the 20th Century. This is not just another interpretation of these artists' works or styles, but a history of attitudes and opinions gleaned from their private writings, memoirs, and manifestoes. An extremely valuable sourcebook for the history of art. The appendixes and notes contain biographical sketches of the principal avant-garde painters as well as an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Highly recommended for college and university art libraries and for large public libraries.—*Elizabeth Lindquist-Cock, Dept. of Art History, Massachusetts Coll. of Art, Boston*

**Sitchin, Zecharia. The Twelfth Planet.**

Stein & Day. 1976. 329p. bibliog. index. LC 75-37857. ISBN 0-8128-1939-X. \$12.95. ARCHAEOLOGY/HIST

This is an attempt, in the best tradition of von Däniken, to prove that Earth was originally peopled by settlers from another planet (the biblical *Nefilim*) and that these extraterrestrial colonists were the gods of ancient lore. Sitchin postulates that the theogony/cosmogony of Greece and the ancient Near East, far from being mythological, was strictly true. He has done extensive research, especially in surviving Sumerian and Akkadian texts; and this reliance on the living word of the early peoples rather than on the usual mute and ambiguous archaeological debris

makes his study exciting, even credible. Although at times a bit forced, his main argument is most provocative and compelling. *The Twelfth Planet* presents documentation for a radical new theory which, by answering some age-old questions, merely widens the ripples in the pool. (As the author notes, "If the *Nefilim* . . . created Man on Earth, who created the *Nefilim*?" ) The book should be as talked-about as its von Däniken predecessors.—*Jo-Ann D. Suleiman, Wright Patterson Air Force Base Medical Lib., Dayton, Ohio*

**Taylor, Benjamin J. & Thurman J. White, eds. The Evolution of Issues and Ideas in America, 1776-1976.**

Univ. of Oklahoma Pr. 1976. 375p. LC 76-18769. ISBN 0-8061-1327-8. bibliog. index. \$19.95; pap. \$8.95. PHIL/HIST

The aim of this mammoth production is to demonstrate American accomplishments and contributions to the evolution of thought in 17 ambitious and somewhat related essays, arranged in five different sections (history, law, government, economics, and ecology). In between are such rest stops as society, education, psychology, philosophy, and science. This is a potpourri, which, in its attempt to fulfill the expectations of the title, unavoidably flirts with fragmentation. Yet, the individual contributions are so self-contained that it is easy, even obligatory, to overlook that pitfall. An example of the diversity: When William F. Swindler discusses the "Rights of Man," he starts with Locke and the Enlightenment, progresses through Jefferson, Hamilton, and company to South America, then to the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by way of the *laissez faire* period and the New Deal. Lest the reader be intimidated by its very bulk, this volume invites informative browsing.—*Mark Norton Schatz, Anne Arundel County Historical Society, Glen Burnie, Md.*

**Torrey, Volta. Wind-Catchers: American windmills of yesterday and tomorrow.**

Stephen Greene. 1976. 226p. photogs. bibliog. index. LC 76-13816. ISBN 0-8289-0292-5. \$12.95. TECH/HIST

Although there have been a few recent books on windmills, owing their origin either to antiquarian interest or to interest in wind as an alternative energy source, none has attempted to deal with windmills from both points of view as this book does. Although the author, a journalist, writes in a journalistic (should I say in a breezy style?) which tends to pass lightly over essential technical detail, his sources are excellent and his facts are accurate. In addition to a good summary of ancient windmill history, Torrey covers more recent attempts to use wind energy to drive electric power generators such as the Grandpa's Knob experiment in 1941 in Vermont and the government's continuing projects. A good selective bibliography and sources of information on modern windmills as practical generators for farm and home use are also included.—*Eleanor A. Maass, Swarthmore Coll. Lib., Pa.*