

The Cambridge World History of Food. Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas (eds.). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 2000. 2 vols. Pp., vol. 1, xlii, 1-1120; vol. 2, xii, 1121-2153. Illus., scientific name list, indices. \$175.00 (two-volume set, cloth). ISBN: 0-521-40214-X (vol. 1), 0-521-40215-8 (vol. 2), 0-521-40216-6 (set).

This monumental achievement provides an indispensable reference for anyone interested in food and foodstuffs. Readers of this journal will be interested in the whole work, but particularly in the first parts, dealing with food prehistory and ethnobiology.

Subsequent parts deal with nutrition, malnutrition, and food history. These I will not review, except to say that they are uniformly competent and interesting, and provide up-to-date references. Chapters on China (Françoise Sabban), Japan (Naomichi Ishige), South America (Donald Gade), and southern Europe (Kenneth Albala), as well as the whole section VI, "History, Nutrition, and Health," are notably interesting to ethnobiologists. One warning: the chapters on iron (Susan Kent and P. Stuart-Macadam) and iron deficiency (Susan Kent), as well as Leon Abrams' chapter on vegetarianism, are controversial and readers should compare them with more orthodox literature on the subject.

The section on food prehistory includes excellent chapters on methods and data analysis, and a chapter by Mark Cohen presents his hypotheses on the process of domestication. I personally find his ideas intriguing, but not convincing, and would rather have seen a more general review of views on domestication. Fortunately, such a review is provided in the chapters by Joy McCorrison on barley and wheat, and these seem considerably more convincing than Cohen's.

The much longer section on ethnobiology provides accounts of foods, from amaranth to wine. The selection of foods included seems somewhat strange: bison, muscovy ducks, and khat are included, but apples, pears, and pigeon peas are not. Chapters are generally excellent but are uneven in quality and coverage. McCorrison's superb chapters (noted above) deal almost exclusively with domestication in prehistory. Many other chapters (e.g., sugar, by J. H. Galloway) deal primarily with recorded history. Still others (e.g., soybeans, by Thomas Soroziak) are best on modern uses and processing.

Some chapters are sorely in need of updating. J. M. J. de Wet, a leading expert on African millets, has missed important recent findings on Chinese millets. The chapter on cruciferous and green leafy vegetables by Robert Field ignores modern work on the cabbage family, even the readily accessible and excellent systematization of taxonomy in Smartt and Simmonds (1995:62-88).

My favorite chapters are those on maize and white potatoes by Ellen Messer. She provides detailed reviews that cover everything from prehistory to modern processing and consumption patterns. Her chapters are exemplary in their selection of coverage, balance of data and analysis, and judicial interpretation. Closely following these are chapters by Daniel Gade, who covers most of the major domestic animals, as well as South American foods. He is both a top scholar and an excellent writer. Many other excellent chapters might be noted, including taro

(Nancy Pollack) and tomatoes (Janet Long). Sheldon Aaronson's chapter on fungi gives a monumental list of all the major fungi eaten in the world.

Some chapters are notably weak. Hansjörg Küster tries to cover "Spices and Flavorings" in seven pages. His bibliography has only five items, four of them secondary sources. The chapter is based on the long-discredited idea that spices were used to mask the flavor of spoiled food. Quite apart from the economic absurdity of this (spices, worth their weight in gold, used to save a few cents on meat?), it would explain, if it were true, only the medieval European usage. But his argument neither holds here, for medieval European elites insisted on fresh meat, and would have been disgusted by our "aged" beef. Certainly, no one affluent enough to buy spices in the heavy spice-using regions of the world (Indonesia, Mexico, etc.) eats, or has to eat, spoiled food. More importantly, every cook knows that spices *bring out* the taste of foods. I have been the unlucky guinea pig in some trials of spices as concealers of spoiled food taste, and—trust me, dear reader—don't try it. The same author's chapter on rye, while at least accurate, is only three pages long, out of date, and confined largely to northern Europe in coverage. In fairness, his chapter on the history of North European food is very fine.

On the whole, readers can be safely directed to this book for up-to-date reviews of the literature, but readers must beware, especially of the shorter and less heavily referenced chapters. Sadly, in spite of the price of the book, it is too uneven and unreliable to serve as one's sole reference and must be used in conjunction with other standard sources. This said, the set provides so much that is hard to find elsewhere, and so many unique and up-to-date reviews, that it will remain a basic reference for some time to come.

E. N. Anderson
Dept. of Anthropology
University of California
Riverside, CA 92521-0418

REFERENCE CITED

Smarrt, J. and N.W. Simmonds. 1995. *Evolution of Crop Plants*. Longman Scientific and Technical, New York.

Ethnobiology at the Millennium: Past Promise and Future Prospects. Richard I. Ford (ed.). Anthropological Papers no. 91. Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan. Museum of Anthropology Publications, Ann Arbor. 2001. \$20.00 (paper). ISBN: 0-915703-50-5.

The papers in this volume are a result of the Presidents' Symposium at the annual meeting of the Society of Ethnobiology in Ann Arbor, Michigan, March 2000. All authors are former presidents of the society, with one exception: a former editor of the *Journal of Ethnobiology*. Similar in scope to Richard Ford's edited volume, *The Nature and Status of Ethnobotany* (Ford 1994), this book assesses where