

The author's extensive discussion of alloy compositions and coloring techniques is of necessity based mainly upon European literature of a rather unreliable kind—the formularies or compilations of workshop recipes that stretch back to the catchpenny Books of Secrets of the early 16th century and the much earlier manuscript compilations that reflect the activities of architects more than those of artisans. This reviewer had always regarded Hiorn's copious listing of alloys and coloring methods in 1902 as the work of an uninspired hack. Needham's dependence on this listing gives unfortunate permanence to the names of some proprietary and transitory alloys best forgotten, but the very fact that such phenomena have been beneath the notice of the professional metallurgist serves effectively to emphasize Needham's point about the dangers of separation between different classes of people dealing with similar phenomena.

There is rich ammunition here for both sides in the debate over diffusion versus independent invention, as well as for studying the roles of internal and external factors in the development of science and technology. This volume, though shorter than most of its predecessors, is important on many levels. The perspective of the whole work is leading to a true world view without loss of detail, and it is sure to be regarded as one of the great intellectual achievements of the 20th century.

The book is pleasant to handle and easy to read. There are two sets of footnotes, one giving the Chinese characters for the names of key persons and writings, the other technical or bibliographic information; these are where they belong but so rarely appear nowadays, at the foot of the page. Both the copious bibliography (which lists titles without annoying abbreviations) and the detailed index are unusually useful, fully meriting the cost of the 200 pages that they occupy alongside the 300 pages of text.

CYRIL STANLEY SMITH  
*Massachusetts Institute of Technology,  
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(Continued on page 568)

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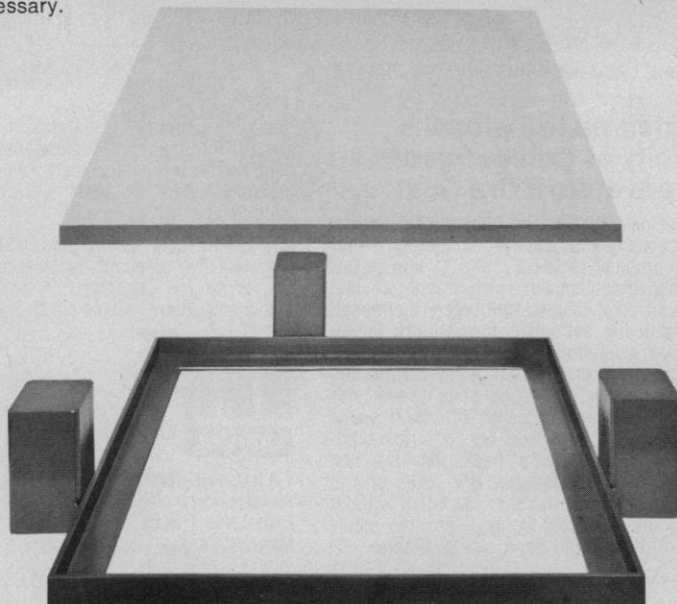
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\$7.75. Science and Engineering Policy Series.

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