



Review

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Sicily; Leontini,
Tetradrachm
c. 450 B.C.

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fewer colored illustrations than the articles in the *National Geographic*. Of the celebrated apse mosaic of the Transfiguration, the best that this volume can offer is a photograph (facing page 44) taken with a flash bulb, of which the less said the better. We await the official publication which will be issued by the University of Michigan Press.

GLANVILLE DOWNEY
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COIN AND TEMPLE: A Study of the Architectural Representation on Ancient Jewish Coins, by ALICE MUEHSAM. ix, 70 pages, 7 figures, 11 plates. E. J. Brill, Leiden, Holland 1966 (Near Eastern Researches, 1) 36.00 guilders

This is a minute study of a series of beautiful Jewish silver coins, equivalent to the Greek tetradrachms, which show on the obverse a tetrastyle façade within a border of dots. In the center, between the columns, there is an object in the shape of a chest. Dr. Muehsam, after presenting interpretations of various scholars, offers convincing arguments for believing that the chest represents the Ark of the Covenant. The façade does not, as might be supposed, represent the Herodian Temple. After a study of appropriate passages from the Bible and Talmud the author demonstrates that the coin type depicts the view from the summit of the Mount of Olives as seen by the priest while conducting the purification sacrifice of the Red Heifer. He gazes across the Kedron Valley over the Corinthian Gate to the Great Gate, through the center of which he could see the entrance of the Temple, though the view of the Temple itself was obstructed

by the intervening buildings. The Temple with its Holy of Holies is symbolized by the chest, which stands for the Ark of the Covenant.

Most of the coins show a row of bars beneath the façade. This, the author believes, indicates the colonnade of Solomon's Porch, which appeared to be beneath the gate, as viewed from the Mount of Olives. Maps and diagrams indicating the line of sight reinforce the arguments from the literature. The whole theory, while not completely convincing, is attractively presented and may well be the correct interpretation.

Finally, on the basis of the inscriptions on the coins, the author concludes that the earlier, dated coins, which have hitherto been allocated to the time of the Bar Kokhba rebellion (132-135 A.D.), actually belong to the early years of the First Rebellion (66-68). The later, undated pieces may be assigned to the Bar Kokhba period.

The text is followed by a useful catalogue of coins, arranged by types, most of which are illustrated in the excellent plates.

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EARLY JAPANESE ART: The Great Tombs and Treasures, by J. EDWARD KIDDER. 362 pages, 37 figures, 76 illustrations on 60 plates, 10 color illustrations on 14 plates, 3 maps, frontispiece in color. D. Van Nostrand, Princeton, New Jersey 1964 \$15.00

This book consists of eight chapters; the major effort is concentrated in chapters III and following, i.e. the chapters dealing with the Kofun (called "protohistoric" by the author) period. It is possible to raise the question whether Kofun

artifacts should indeed be included in the category of Japanese art, when we consider that most of them are of Korean and Chinese origin, without the local refinement visible in Buddhist sculpture, or Yamatoe. However, this point is more or less a matter of personal evaluation.

The descriptions of the artifacts are very detailed, probably the most detailed among the non-Japanese works on the same topic published so far. However, there is some room for scepticism. To this reviewer it seems that the descriptions were neither properly organized nor synthesized. The reader is taken directly into the discussion of the individual artifacts, without having received sufficient preparatory material. No separate summary or synthesis is presented. Rather, the synthesis is submerged in the scholarly description of the artifacts. The result resembles an amassed glossary of objects in which the descriptions of the artifacts are not always in proper order (see pages 60-65).

The author bases most of his interpretations on Nihon-shoki and Kojiki myths, which he himself once claimed to be direct borrowings from Chinese sources (here he neglects the fact that the Kudara-hongi, the standard history of Paekche, played a greater role). In appendix III, Japanese metalwork is discussed. It seems very strange to this reviewer that this problem is dealt with on the basis of myths rather than on the more scientific bases of archaeology and metallurgy. In general, there are few references to the contributions of archaeology and historical studies. Rather, the emphasis is on the subjective interpretation of dubious myths.

The citation of Japanese sources is generally insufficient and inaccurate: e.g. the author states that some Japanese archaeologists presume some influence of Buddhism on the decoration of the sword handle with two confronted dragon heads (page 61). Such an opinion has never been published, to the reviewer's knowledge. The motif of the confronted dragons is frequently seen in Chinese bronzes of the Chun-chuh period, prior to the diffusion of Buddhism into China. The bibliography of Japanese works is very difficult to use,