

## PALESTINIAN NUMISMATICS.

CATALOGUE OF THE GREEK COINS OF PALESTINE (*Galilee, Samaria, and Judaea*) by George Francis Hill, M.A., Keeper of Coins and Medals. With one Map, a Table of the Hebrew Alphabet and forty-two Plates. (London : Sold at the British Museum, and by [various publishers]), 1914.

Apart from the fact that it is confined to a particular collection, Mr. Hill's *Catalogue* differs from De Saulcy's epoch making *Numismatique de la Terre Sainte* by way both of exclusion and of inclusion. As stated on the title-page, Mr. Hill confines himself almost exclusively<sup>1</sup> to the coins of Western Palestine. Thus, of the important cities of the Decapolis included by De Saulcy, Scythopolis alone is here dealt with. On the other hand, the coins of the Jews, both under their native dynasties and under the Roman administration, to which De Saulcy and Madden have devoted special treatises, form not the least valuable part of Mr. Hill's *Catalogue*.

• Although nominally only a catalogue of the coins of Palestine in Mr. Hill's keeping in the British Museum, the work is practically a *corpus* of the numismatics of Palestine from the second or third century before, to the middle of the third century after, the Christian era, that is, "to the close of the imperial coinage in this district under Gallus and Volusianus." This is due to the fact that the recent acquisition by the British Museum of the rich cabinet of the late Mr. Leopold Hamburger of Frankfort, has "placed the British Museum collection, in numbers, and probably also in quality, at the head of all others in respect of Jewish coins." This greater abundance of material, on which wide and exact scholarship and expert numismatic knowledge have been brought to bear, has enabled Mr. Hill to correct many false readings and erroneous attributions of less favoured and less accomplished predecessors in this branch of numismatics.

In a short notice such as the present, it is impossible to do justice to the wealth of material here provided for the study, not merely of

<sup>1</sup> The one exception is the coinage of Herod Philip.

the numismatic history of Western Palestine, but of the wider problems of its secular and religious history in the period above indicated. All that can be attempted is to give the student of the history and religion of Palestine a general idea of the contents of the volume, and to call attention to one or two points on which the last word has not yet been said.

The arrangement of the British Museum catalogues is probably familiar to all who are likely to read this notice. It will therefore be sufficient to note that, as in Mr. Hill's previous catalogue of the coins of the cities of Phoenicia, the arrangement is geographical and alphabetical, until we reach the special section dealing with the coins of the Jews. Thus the three main divisions of Western Palestine, Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, are taken in succession, the mints in each being arranged alphabetically, and their several issues treated in chronological order. For the Jewish coinage, of course, chronological considerations alone come into play, the coins of the Hasmonean dynasty, the Herodian dynasty, and the Roman Procurators being followed by those of the First and Second Revolts. The catalogue proper (pp. 1-316) is preceded by 114 pages of Introduction, in which the more interesting or more difficult problems are discussed, and is followed by the usual series of indexes—types, symbols, remarkable inscriptions, eras, etc.—which are of the greatest value to historical and other students.

Coming now to the contents of the "Introduction," we find, first of all, a short discussion of the coinage of the two Galilean mints, Sepphoris and Tiberias. The latter city may be taken as an illustration of the light thrown by the study of numismatics on historical problems. The special problem in this case is the date of the foundation of Tiberias by Herod Antipas. Schürer, our standard authority in such matters, regards it as probable that the city was founded "after or about A.D. 26," and this date is generally accepted by historians, on the (apparent) authority of Josephus. But the numismatic evidence, as here adduced, shows that the real date must lie between A.D. 17 and 23. Mr. Hill suggests as "a working hypothesis" the date A.D. 19-20.

His main considerations in arriving at this date seem to be two in number: (1) The imperial coinage of Tiberias begins under Trajan in the year 81 of the city; since A.D. 99-100 is the most probable date of the death of Agrippa II, when the imperial coinage would naturally begin, Mr. Hill deduces the year A.D. 19-20 as the

first year of the city. But there is considerable doubt as to whether Agrippa retained the city of Tiberias up to his death (see Schürer, *Geschichte d. jüd. Volkes*, 4th ed., ii, 220).

(2) The coins of Hadrian begin with the year 101 of the city, which Mr. Hill equates with "about 119-20, probably on the occasion of Hadrian's first visit to Palestine." I do not know what authority Mr. Hill is following in assuming that Hadrian was in Palestine in this year, or in either of these years.<sup>1</sup> But he appears to have paid a hurried visit to Palestine from Syria soon after his accession in A.D. 117 (Dürr, *Die Reisen des Kaisers Hadrian*, p. 16), in which case the first year of Tiberias would be A.D. 17-18. This, the earliest possible date, as we have seen, allowed by the numismatic evidence, is that favoured by Dr. Walter Otto in his recent (1913) elaborate monograph *Herodes* (col. 182).

Among the cities of Samaria, one is struck with the importance, in the early centuries of our era, of Caesarea and Neapolis (Nābulus), as reflected by the long series of imperial and colonial coins extending to the reign of Volusianus.<sup>2</sup> To the numismatic history of the former city Mr. Hill is able to add two unpublished coins (Nos. 34, 35) struck by Vespasian, after the outbreak of the war in A.D. 66, in his quality of *legatus* of the new independent province of Judaea, later Syria Palaestina. Of the great variety of types presented by the coins of the two cities named much might be said. The most interesting, of course, is the well-known type of Mount Gerizim with its temple and stairway, which first appears on the reverse of the Neapolis coins of Antoninus Pius and continues to the end. Mr. Hill's careful description is worth quoting; it runs thus: "Mount Gerizim, consisting of two masses, separated by a ravine up which leads a sloping roadway. The mass on left (A) has a steep stairway leading up past shrines in the rock-face to top, where is a temple seen in three-quarters perspective, and behind it another building or altar. The mass on right (B) has a branch from the roadway leading over a shoulder to top where is an altar.

<sup>1</sup> Has Mr. Hill inadvertently fixed on this date on the strength of the coin commemorating a visit of Hadrian to Judaea (Madden, p. 231), with the legend HADRIANUS AUG. COS. III, P. P.? Certainly Hadrian was consul for the third (and last) time in A.D. 119, but this year was spent in Italy, and the coin in question must commemorate the later visit in A.D. 130.

<sup>2</sup> The statement, p. xvii, that the coinage of Caesarea "extends to the reign of Gallienus" is probably a slip (see p. xxi, note 1).

Below, in front, a long colonnade, interrupted at entrance to stairway, showing arches over two wider intercolumniations" (p. 48).

This temple, according to Mr. Hill, "is doubtless the temple of Zeus Hypsistos built by Hadrian" (p. xxviii). The authority for this is Damascius, but it seems at least equally probable that Hadrian's temple was dedicated to Sarapis. The Samaritan Chronicle, as Mr. Hill informs us in a footnote, calls it a temple of "Saphis," which, he adds, "may be meant for Jupiter Sospes." But surely Serapis (or Sarapis) is much more likely to have been the original reading. M. Clermont-Ganneau, a high authority, certainly holds that "the object of the cult established by Hadrian on Gerizim was Serapis" (see Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, p. 92, n. 36).

The catalogue of the coins of Judaea begins with those of the Roman colony of Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem), which form an almost continuous series from Hadrian to Valerian. The most interesting types here are those connected with the legions quartered in Jerusalem, and that of the City Goddess, probably Astarte, in her temple—"presumably the temple on the site of which the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was afterwards built" (p. xlv).<sup>1</sup> The popularity of the worship of Serapis at this period is also attested by coins of Aelia, as by those of Caesarea, Neapolis and other cities.

Some of Mr. Hill's best work will be found in his treatment of the coins and cults of the old Philistine cities, especially those of Ascalon and Gaza—treated more fully in his paper on "Some Palestinian Cults in the Graeco-Roman Age" in the *Proceedings of the Brit. Acad.*, Vol. V, 1912—to which I can only refer in passing. A brief reference, however, must be made to certain coins, "the provenance of which indicates that they circulated in north-western Arabia, on the borders of Philistia and Egypt." These Mr. Hill has wisely separated from Gaza and assigned to an independent "Philisto-Arabian and Egypto-Arabian series." They probably belong to the petty rulers or tribal sheikhs, who lived by levying toll on the rich caravans that passed through their territory, from southern Arabia and Egypt respectively, to the great emporium at Gaza. Quite the most noteworthy of these small coins is a unique silver piece, which has already been the subject of a considerable literature from the fact

<sup>1</sup> The reference given is Heisenberg, *Grabeskirche u. Apostelkirche*, i, p. 197 ff.

that the deity, which forms the type of its reverse, is distinctly named יָהוּ (Yahu, now so familiar to us from the Elephantine papyri as an alternative spelling of the Hebrew Yahweh). Here, again, Mr. Hill's description may be quoted: "Male divinity (Yahu), bearded, wearing himation leaving upper part of body bare, seated right on a winged wheel; his right is wrapped in his garment; on extended left he holds a hawk; above יָהוּ [in Phoenician characters]; in field right, bald-headed bearded mask [facing] left." The reader must be referred to Mr. Hill's study of this coin, p. lxxxvi ff., where full references are given to previous discussions by various scholars.

We come now to what many will regard as the most important part of Mr. Hill's work, his discussion—all too brief—of the coins of the Jews (pp. lxxxix–cviii) with the relative catalogue on pp. 184–316. It is true "that any attempt to deal with [the subject] in detail would require a second volume equal in size to Madden's *Coins of the Jews*"; but now that he has finished his official catalogue, is it too much to ask that Mr. Hill should, without delay, give us the detailed treatment of which the Jewish coinage stands so much in need? Much water has flowed beneath the bridge since Madden's great work appeared in 1881.

Under the rubric, "Maccabæan Period" (p. xc), Mr. Hill introduces us at once to the most crucial problem of Jewish numismatics, that of the date and attribution of the so-called "Maccabæan shekels," or, as they are here more wisely termed, the "thick" shekels, a nomenclature which does not beg the question of date, and distinguishes them from the thinner and broader shekels of the Second Revolt. Nothing in Mr. Hill's volume, I may be allowed to say, has given me greater satisfaction than his attribution of the shekels in question to the only period to which in my opinion, they can belong,<sup>1</sup> viz., the period of the First Revolt, A.D. 66–70. After successfully replying to Reinach's arguments, in his *Jewish Coins* (p. 12 f.), in support of the usual attribution to Simon Maccabæus, Mr. Hill adds, "the most striking piece of evidence is afforded by the epigraphy." Here Mr. Hill has had the courage to follow a path which previous students, the present writer included, had regarded as a *cul de sac*. By a minute study of certain test characters of the "thick" shekels with the corresponding forms on the Maccabæan bronzes on the one hand, and on the coins of the

<sup>1</sup> See the article "Money," in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, III, 424 f., by the present writer.

Second Revolt on the other, he here shows that, from the point of view of the development of the Hebrew alphabet, the shekels in dispute must be placed between the coins of "Antigonus and those of the Second Revolt, but not at an earlier period" (see pp. xcii f.).

Since the publication of the *Catalogue*, however, there has appeared evidence of another kind with an immediate bearing on this problem. In the second instalment of an account of the excavation by the Assumptionist Fathers in Jerusalem of the traditional "House of Caiaphas and Church of St. Peter," the well-known scholar Père Germer-Durand gives a tantalizingly brief notice, in the *Revue Biblique* of April last (p. 234), of the find of a shekel and half-shekel, both of the "year 3" (reproduced *ibid.*) with contemporary Roman coins. It would be premature to pronounce a final judgment on the strength of so meagre a statement. There is little doubt, however, that when the learned Father gives us the fuller account, which he seems to promise and which is certainly due, the evidence will be such as to give a final *coup de grâce* to the fiction of the "Maccabaeans" shekels.

Passing over the genuine coinage of Simon Maccabaeus—to whom "the epigraphic argument" allows a few "bronze  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and  $\frac{1}{8}$  (?) shekels of year 4" (p. xciii),—and his successors, and that of the older members of the Herodian dynasty, we come to perhaps the next most perplexing problem of Jewish numismatics, the eras of the coinage of Agrippa II. Here a somewhat fuller *résumé* of the history of this prince would have enabled the student to follow more intelligently the discussion of the problem. Mr. Hill, however, shows that all the difficulties may be met by the assumption of only two eras, beginning in A.D. 56 and 61 respectively. This involves the entirely probable hypothesis that the titulature of the contemporary emperors was not correctly observed in Agrippa's remote "corner of the Empire." The probable significance of Agrippa's later coins with the letters S. C. (*Senatus Consulto*) has been already suggested in the discussion above as to the date of the founding of Tiberias.

Mr. Hill's brief reference in his Introduction to the coins of the Procurators (p. ci) contains the only serious slip I have detected in his book. "There seems," he says, "to be no evidence for the date 33 on coins of the earliest type which would enable us to assign coins to Coponius," the first of the Roman Procurators sent by Augustus on the deposition of Archelaus in A.D. 6. The first part

of Mr. Hill's statement is doubtless correct, as is also the following statement "that the thirty-sixth year of Augustus is the first in which coins were struck." But this year of the Actian era ran from September of the year 5 to September of the year 6, so that there is after all nothing impossible, or even improbable, in the supposition that Coponius arrived at Caesarea in the autumn of A.D. 6 and began to strike coins immediately on his arrival.<sup>1</sup>

The last section of the *Catalogue* deals with the coins of the Second Revolt (A.D. 132-135). These Mr. Hill arranges in three main groups, consisting of tetradrachms (20), denarii (95), and bronzes (111), threading his way with great skill through the difficulties of classification within these groups. Two minor criticisms, however, may be offered. Mr. Hill explains the epithet Nasi after the name Simeon on certain coins of the first year as meaning "president of the Synedrion." This cannot be the correct explanation. The real synedrion, or supreme council of Jerusalem, came to an end in A.D. 70, and Mr. Hill no doubt means the council of Jewish doctors at Jamnia. But had the Simeon Bar-Kozeba<sup>2</sup> of the second revolt been the head of the Rabbinic college there, his name would have been preserved in Jewish tradition along with that of his supporter, Rabbi Aqiba. The Simeon of the revolt was doubtless a purely secular leader, who assumed, or had given him, the title of Nasi, Ezekiel's favourite term for the Messianic ruler of the new age.

My second criticism has reference to Mr. Hill's explanation, due to Mr. Rogers (*Num. Chron.*, 1911, 205 ff.)<sup>3</sup> of the obverse type of the broad tetradrachms or shekels, as "the four pillars for the veil before the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle, with a conventionalized representation within of the ark and mercy seat" (p. cvi). I cannot see that this ingenious explanation is preferable to that most

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the Procuratorial coins in general, it is tempting to connect a certain number of the issues with the arrival of a new governor. Thus the second set of coins are dated A.D. 8-9, which suggests the arrival of Marcus Ambibulus (or Ambivius), the issue of A.D. 15-16 that of Valerius Gratus, and—most important of all, if my hypothesis could be established, as having a decisive bearing on the most crucial date in Pauline chronology—the issue, after a considerable pause, in the fifth year of Nero may be taken as coinciding with the arrival of Porcius Festus before October, A.D. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hill seems unduly sceptical as to the identity of the Simeon of the coins with the leader of the movement, Bar-Kozeba, *alias* Bar-Cochba.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Rogers, however, there says he is following out a suggestion given him by Mr. Hill.

generally given, that we have here a representation of the Temple at Jerusalem, which Bar Cochba's followers hoped to restore.

The fluted columns, with their circular bases and capitals and the architrave which they support, seem to point unmistakably to a construction of stone, not of wood. And what, on the new hypothesis, is the structure underneath the pillars? Is it not intended, as in the similar coin of Caesarea (Plate III, 1), to represent the "podium [of the temple] divided into panels by pilasters" (p. 17). It will be said that the front of the Jewish temple had no such pillars. That is true, but we know from a glass bowl, found some years ago in the catacombs at Rome, and often reproduced (see *Enc. Bib.*, IV, col. 4934, Benzinger, *Archaeol.*, 218), that the Jews of the third century conceived of Solomon's temple as having a porch supported on just four such pillars, between which the entrance door of the Holy Place is seen half open, the leaves decorated by knobs as in the coin type. The only essential difference is that the door of the catacomb diagram is square while that of the coins has a round head.

In concluding this rapid survey of the *Catalogue*, I wish to thank the new Keeper of the Department of Coins and Medals for a work which is not only the most reliable guide to the study of the numismatics of Palestine but an invaluable source-book, a true *Quelle*, for the history of the period with which it deals, and especially for the study of the great variety of cults which prevailed in the eastern half of the early empire. The types or symbols of the later coins, further, often cast an interesting sidelight on the contemporary temple architecture (see *e.g.*, Plate XIV, 9, and p. lxi) as well as on the social and religious customs of the time (see *e.g.*, Plate VII, 18, for cock-fighting at some festival at Neapolis).

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