

indispensabile per vari indirizzi di studio (epigrafia, topografia, storia del cristianesimo, storia sociale, tarda latinità ecc.).

*Jaakko Aronen*

*Otto Mørkholm: Early Hellenistic Coinage, from the accession of Alexander to the peace of Apamea (336—188 B.C.).* Edited by Philip Grierson and Ulla Westermark. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991. XXII, 273 p. GBP 60.00.

Hellenistic history is full of cases where numismatics can contribute a great deal to our knowledge of the past. Take, for instance, such cases as Hellenistic Susa or the Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kingdoms of the Farther East. Therefore, the lucid and comprehensive survey provided by the volume under review is of use beyond the narrow boundaries of its special field. Originally the work was planned to cover the whole history of Hellenistic coinage until 30 B.C., but the author was only able to complete the first part (up to the early second century B.C.) before his premature death in 1983. However, what we are offered is a full and conclusive treatment, with, according to the Foreword, only minor alterations from the editors. The reader is not troubled by the fact that the long introductory chapter was originally meant to be for the whole work. An Epilogue, written by Mørkholm and Grierson, gives a summary of later Hellenistic coinage. Appendices (by Grierson) give lists of rulers, a chronological table, a glossary and a classified bibliography. Westermark has selected the excellent plates which illustrate the text.

*Klaus Karttunen*

*G. W. Bowersock: Hellenism in Late Antiquity.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990. XII, 109 p. GBP 19.50.

The starting point of these six essays is the close connection between Hellenism and paganism. While the response of Christianity to paganism has often been studied, the author is interested in the response of paganism to Christianity, in the nature of late paganism, in its strong Semitic (but not Judaic or Christian) element, and in the extent and persistence of Hellenization in the Near East. From this viewpoint Bowersock presents us with studies of the relation between paganism and Greek culture, on the conception of holiness, with an excursion on some Christian elements in the Alexandrian cult of 'Αἰών (virgin birth, with Persephone as the pagan Mary), on Syrian Hellenism, and on the importance of Dionysus in late paganism. In addition he deals with the peculiarity of Egypt and its traditions, with an interesting reassessment of such notorious figures as Horapollon and Dioscorus of Aphroditopolis. The last essay is dedicated to the problem of Hellenism and Islam. Convincingly he argues that the extent of Hellenization even in the countryside has been much wider than has often been supposed. On the other hand, even to the invading Arabian Muslims Hellenism was not strange. Greek was then officially used by early Umayyads, who also favoured Greek art despite its iconic tendencies, and among Eastern Christians the use of Greek persisted at least until the late eighth century.

*Klaus Karttunen*