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THE WIDOW'S MITE WORTH THREE-SIXTEENTHS OF A CENT

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The coin which we call the mite (the widow's mite) was so called by the King James translators of the Bible. It is the bronze Lepton, minted by the Hebrews and there are a number of varieties as described by earlier writers in *The Numismatist*.

The name given this coin (Lepton) is from the Greek which is not surprising since the Greek culture had partially prevailed most of the eastern Mediterranean lands by the time this coinage was started.

The choice of the original name and the English translation were both appropriate since both terms mean "a small object" or "an article of minor value."

In examining the purchasing power of the Lepton in terms of modern coins, we find that it was rated at one half the value of the kodrantas which in turn had the value of the Roman quadrans. The quadrans was one-fourth of an as. The as was equivalent to three British farthings or $1\frac{1}{4}\text{¢}$ our money (before inflation). Therefore, the Lepton had a value which was the equivalent of about three-sixteenths of a United States cent.

THE LEADING SYMBOLS FOUND ON COINS

The leading symbols on coins are: 1, a cross; 2, a crown; 3, a sceptre and orb; 4, a sword; 5, an animal as an heraldic cognizance or a figurative emblem; 6, a shield with or without quarterings; 7, and finally, an effigy of a patron saint, ultimately superseded or accompanied by one of the temporal rulers. All these marks of authority and distinction underwent from period to period development and change indicative of modified political and religious feeling, of more complex relationships between reigning families, or of the growth of artistic taste.

The type with the cross presents itself with an infinite amount of variation both in the form of the cross and in the character of the cantonments. The most usual features in the angles are pellets, or globules, or annulets; and most frequently the number corresponds to that of the Trinity. But on some pieces — it is true, of later date — four of these objects appear; and if there is no mystical figure intended, there is certainly no reference to the value, as the penny or denier and the groat or gros equally bear these unexplained accessories.

From *Coinage of the European Continent*
By W. Carew Hazlitt, 1893

Obituaries

JAMES EARLE FRASER

October 15, 1953

From the time when James Earle Fraser took a model of "The End of the Trail" to Paris with him and won a \$1,000 prize at the age of twenty, his career was a remarkable success story. Augustus St. Gaudens took an interest in the young sculptor, and under this benign influence his work developed and his reputation spread. Monumental statues of such public figures as Theodore Roosevelt, Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, General Patton and the Mayo brothers formed the bulk of his output, but it gave him considerable satisfaction to recall that this massive succession had been emphatically broken by his design for the 1913 buffalo nickel. His equestrian groups for the Lincoln Memorial Circle in Washington were a gift of Italy to the United States in 1951, the year in which he received the gold medal of the American Institute of Arts and Letters.

In all his work, Fraser carried on the great tradition of classical sculpture which the Renaissance masters and their modern disciples, including St. Gaudens, had bequeathed to him. To this tradition, which was well established in America in the nineteenth century, Fraser brought certain authentic qualities of his own: a preference for distinctively American subjects, a sound technique and, at his best, the power to communicate strength and vitality to work of monumental proportions. His experiences in the '80s as a child in the Indian country of South Dakota undoubtedly played an important part in the shaping of this unmistakably American career. "The End of the Trail," which was bought by the town of Visalia, Cal., might well have been placed — as Fraser once hoped it would be — at the San Francisco end of the great Lincoln Highway that spans the United States.

Permission to publish the above editorial which appeared in the October, 1953, issue of the "New York Herald Tribune" has been generously accorded *The Numismatist*. It was first brought to our attention by Martin F. Kortjohn, — Editor.

JAMES V. IANNARELLA, A.N.A. 7022, Philadelphia, Pa.

James V. Iannarella, Philadelphia coin dealer, with store at 135 South 10th Street, died October 16, 1953, after an illness of some duration.

Jim Iannarella was a collector of Naples and Sicilian coins. He had also a deep interest in all coins and in coin collectors. The original meeting, from which was later organized the Philadelphia Coin Club, was held in his store in 1935.

He was elected to several offices in the club, including that of curator for many years and also auctioneer. He held charter membership card No. 9 in the Philadelphia Coin Club and A.N.A. membership No. 7022.

Jim was a veteran of World War I, having served overseas with distinction and was interested in American Legion activities.

PROFESSOR ADOLF REIFENBERG DIES

On August 27th, 1953, Professor Adolf Reifenberg passed away in Jerusalem at the age of 54.

In numismatic circles Prof. Reifenberg is best known by his work "Ancient Jewish Coins" which was first published in 1940, and of which a second edition came out in 1947; a proof of its popularity and the acclaim it deservedly received. In 1937 he had published a book in German, "Monuments of Jewish Antiquities," and in recent years two books were published in London, "Ancient Hebrew Seals" and "Israel's History in Coins." In the course of many years a number of articles on specialized topics appeared in various numismatic magazines the world over. This little survey circumscribes his field of interest in which he was a great scholar and expert. There was nothing too "small" for him; it received his attention, if it had any relation to Jewish history or art. In early years he had started a collection of Jewish coins which has grown to one of the finest in the world.

Reifenberg was born in Berlin in 1899. In his student years he was an ardent Zionist, and he went to Palestine already in 1920. He worked a few years as agricultural laborer and as assistant in the laboratories of the Government Department of Agriculture. In 1924 he became member of the staff of the Hebrew University, and in later years he was founder, chairman and eventually Dean of the Department of Soil Science. His work, "The Soils of Palestine," is the standard work on this subject.

The old controversy of the dating of the shekels to the second revolt found an ardent supporter in Dr. Reifenberg. His acquisition of a hoard found in a pyxis in 1940 lends indeed strength to this thesis. This hoard forms part of an extraordinary exhibition of Jewish antiquities now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

A friendship of many years came to an end. What stands out is his unwavering willingness to advise and to help whenever being called, by his country, by his friends or by his students.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Esther Reifenberg, and two sons, who may find consolation in the fact that his memory will be kept alive by the many friends he made throughout the world. — E.G.