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THE CONNOISSEUR, March, 1966.

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Books Reviewed

First survey of the history of the Sword: Nicodemus Tessin in Stockholm

John Fleming

LES ÉTAINS FRANÇAIS: By Tardy. (Paris: Tardy).

THIS is the first complete account of French pewter to be published and one cannot imagine that it will be superseded for a long time. Suffice it to say that it includes reproductions of 1825 assay and makers' marks, and deals with the pewter objects produced in 1,600 French towns by no fewer than 7,800 named pewterers. There are several hundred illustrations which include reproductions of old prints and trade cards as well as numerous photographs of pewter objects. Unhappily, the standard of production is not quite as high as might be hoped and the photographs are rather dim (pewter is not a photogenic material). But then it is designed not for the coffee-table but the reference library where it takes its place among the other essential works on marks, like those of Jackson, Chaffers and Goldschmidt. The page numbering is erratic (from page 198 we leap backwards to 109 then go on without a break to page 1030 which is immediately followed by the last page of all, mysteriously numbered 1117) and will lead to great confusion when references to the book are cited.

The book begins with an article on *étain* and the various substances covered by that word—not merely tin and pewter but also black metal, Britannia metal and so on—with a table showing the specific gravity of the various alloys. This is followed by a résumé of the various French laws applied to the production of pewter from 1351, when the pewterers were first taxed, to 1911. The bulk of the book is then devoted to the towns in which pewter was made, first of all Paris, followed by the provincial towns arranged alphabetically. An account of the bye-laws governing the production of pewter in each place is followed by lists of the pewterers who worked there (from the middle ages to the present day), derived from archives and signed pieces. Marks are reproduced in the text and there is an index of them at the end of the book. Illustrations show the wide variety of pewter objects made in France—not merely the *pichets* and helmet-shaped ewers which one immediately associates with the medium and country, but also plates, *écuelles*, swirling rococo tureens, fountains, reliquaries, chalices, candlesticks, pilgrim tokens, statuettes, crucifixes, holy water stoups, and even a clyster.

Although this book is designed mainly as an aid to connoisseurship it will also be of some interest to students of style in the decorative arts. From an artistic point of view, the finest objects reproduced are the ewers, basins and salt with delicate Mannerist decorations made in Montbéliard by François Briot, the only great name in the history not merely of French but of European pewter. Apart from him, the pewterers lagged far behind the silversmiths. It is interesting to find Fabreguettes of Bordeaux happily producing rococo *écuelles* in the later 1770's. In France, as in England, pewterers caught up with fashion only in the *art nouveau* period, due mainly to the Parisian potter and metal-worker Jules Brateau, who may perhaps have inspired A. L. Liberty to go in for pewter wares.—John Fleming.

BLANKWAFFEN I: By Heribert Seitz. (Brunswick: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1964. pp. 445, 15 coloured plates, 318 half-tone and line illustrations. DM. 78. —)

THOUGH many studies of special aspects of the history of the sword are available, a general survey of the whole subject has never been published. An attempt to produce such a survey was made by the distinguished nineteenth-century explorer and orientalist Sir Richard Burton, but this never got beyond an introductory volume, *The Book of the Sword*, which appeared in 1884. Since then vast quantities of new sword-material have become available, with the result that students have tended more and more to specialise on one particular period, and there are now very few scholars with the breadth either of knowledge or of interest to enable them to produce a survey on the lines envisaged by Burton. One of the few is Dr. Heribert Seitz, Director of the Swedish Royal Army Museum, whose many publications have ranged over the whole field of the development of edged weapons in the West, and it is very satisfactory to be able to record therefore that he has now turned his attention to the writings of a general history. This is to be in two volumes, of which the first, reviewed here, covers the period down to about 1600.

The scope of the book is enormous. Not only does it trace the broad lines of the history of swords and daggers in Europe from the Stone Age to the end of the sixteenth century, but it also deals with staff-weapons and such important subsidiary matters as decoration, manufacture, makers and their marks and the development of scientific fencing. Indeed, the scope is, if anything, too wide and one cannot but feel that at least the staff-weapons, which are given very cursory treatment, should have been reserved for a separate volume. The strength of the book lies, however, in its treatment of the sword and Dr. Seitz's masterly survey of the present state of our knowledge of this weapon forms a notable addition to the literature of arms and armour. It should be of great value both to the specialist and to the general archaeologist and will undoubtedly remain the standard textbook for a long time to come. Its success is likely to be limited only by the fact that it is written in German and it is to be hoped therefore that the publication of an English edition will not be long delayed.

The book is very well produced, the coloured illustrations in particular being of exceptionally good quality, and there is an extensive bibliography of secondary sources. One looks forward with eagerness to the appearance of the next volume.—Claude Blair.

MANNERISM: By Arnold Hauser (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 2 volumes. £6 6s.)

IT would be natural to begin a work on Mannerism either with an account of the works of art to which the Mannerist label is generally applied or with an investigation of the meaning given by sixteenth-century artistic theorists to the terms *maniera* and *manierose*. But Professor Hauser, who approvingly quotes Góngora's dictum, 'Naturalness—what poverty of spirit. Clarity—what thoughtlessness', eschews both of these approaches. We must plough through 77 pages before we find the first reference to an artistic theorist of the *cinquecento*, and 156 pages before we need to turn to the volume of plates. Indeed, less than one third of the book is directly concerned with works of art and scant attention is given to artistic theory (Vasari's theories are never examined in any detail and Lomazzo figures less prominently than Kafka). Statements about works of art made by their creators are either ignored or swept aside. For example, Palladio wrote of La Rotonda: 'The site is one of the most agreeable and delightful that may be found . . . And because it enjoys the most lovely views on all sides, some screened, others more distant, and others reaching the horizon, loggias were made on each face'. But this does not prevent Professor Hauser from declaring that Palladio's villas 'isolate themselves from the surrounding landscape or garden'.

Professor Hauser approaches Mannerism through the looking glass of art history. It is