

ENGLISH AND WELSH CRUCIFIXES, 670-1550. By J. E. Hunt. (S.P.C.K.; 25s.)

This is an account of medieval crucifixion scenes portrayed in many media: stone carving and wood carving, in wall paintings, and manuscript illumination. There are thirty-nine plates and about eighty pages of text and no index. Of course this is quite inadequate even for an introduction to so wide a subject. Two sections seem purposely avoided: the scenes in embroidery (as in the St John's College altar frontal) and those in alabaster so well represented in the Victoria and Albert Museum and at Ferrara. Yet apart from these so much has been omitted of crucial iconographical significance like the retables at Norwich and in the Walbrabf Richartz collection at Cologne.

But it would be so unjust to write a merely critical review. Mr Hunt has opened up a subject of supreme importance in medieval spirituality and iconography. The standard of photography in his reproductions is uniformly high. His descriptions are admirably concise. His interest is unflagging. Many of the scenes that he reproduces and discusses are barely known. This is particularly true of those from Wales. It is to be regretted that he did not limit his study to Welsh crucifixion scenes, for had he done so he could have produced a study on the same scale that could have been definitive.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

WALLS OF JERICHO. By Margaret Wheeler. (Chatto and Windus; 21s.)

This is a vivid and appealing description of a season's dig at Jericho with Dr Kenyon. It is illustrated by some admirable photographs and by some convincing, vivacious and often amusing sketches. It provides an introduction to the history of the Jericho site and to the kind of discoveries that are being made there. Still more important, it provides an introduction to modern archaeological practice. Sir Mortimer Wheeler has familiarized a vast new public with the existence, purpose and techniques of archaeology. His wife conveys the fact and need of team-work in terms of contrasted personalities and of the day's routine. There is so much in her account that will be novel to ordinary readers. There is only one detail that might seriously surprise a fellow archaeologist; there appears to have been no trace of friction or of tension or of 'Odium Archaeologicum'. Still, possibly that might be explained by the presence of Lady Wheeler.

G.M.

ETHIOPIA: A Cultural History. By Sylvia Pankhurst. (Lalibela House; 37s. 6d.)

This is not only a valuable but an appealing book. No similar account is accessible in English. It is based on first-hand knowledge