



Classical Art Forms and Celtic Mutations. Figural Art in Roman Britain by Claire Lindgren

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deposits far removed from their origin in both time and place. The typological approach is the traditional means of studying brooches and in Mr Kilbride-Jones' work we have a fine example of this at its most sensitive. It is difficult to judge how much weight should be attached to small changes of form: do they represent the lapse of a century, a generation, a week, or merely a change of mood? Objective criteria are lacking, but when they do become available are quite likely to support subjective judgements based on such a thorough knowledge of the objects as is demonstrated here.

The development of the brooches is vividly linked to an historical framework but it has to be remembered that very few facts are established for this period in western Britain and Ireland. An example of the method is the bold description of Nornour as a brooch-factory (p. 16), abandoned in A.D. 196 (p. 74), whereas there is considerable room for doubt as to whether brooches were made there at all (*Cornish Arch.* xvii, 1978, 54), while later types do occur.

Whatever reservations may be felt we should be grateful to Mr Kilbride-Jones for this forceful presentation of his material, which should stimulate further research. The clear drawings of the brooches, apparently the work of the author, are extremely valuable. It would have been useful for technological study if they had been supplemented by close-up photographs of details.

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Classical Art Forms and Celtic Mutations. Figural Art in Roman Britain. By Claire Lindgren. Noyes Press, Park Ridge, New Jersey, 1980. Pp. xii + 148, 2 maps, 14 figs., 96 pls. Price: \$24.00.

Celtic elements have been identified often enough in the discussion of particular works of Romano-British art. Lindgren has attempted a systematic study: difficult, in the absence of any Romano-British Pliny or Vitruvius to tell us about contemporary tastes and standards, but worthwhile if it gives insight into how the fundamental ideas and concepts of one ancient society acted upon those of another. Despite the general title, the author has (wisely) limited her study to representations of four deities: Mercury, Venus, Minerva and Mars. The choice seems apt; their classical iconography is familiar; and the *interpretatio Romana* of native religious cults offers scope for the eye trained in the medium of Celtic art to add its own variations of the image.

In her useful Prologue on theory and method, Lindgren notes, more clearly than some have done, the important distinction between an artist's style and the quality of his execution, and the need to define classical prototypes to which provincial variations referred. An outline history of pre- and post-Conquest Britain provides a reasonably adequate background for those who, like the author, have come to the subject from outside the specialism of Roman Britain; an occasional minor correction is necessary (e.g. to such mis-spellings as Angermering, p. 21). So far, the book has promised a thorough investigation and solid results. Thereafter, sadly, the prospect of disappointment widens.

First, the definition of 'Celtic' characteristics is inadequate. Patterning and schematization may be typical of La Tène art, but are not exclusive to it. For example, there is manifest confusion in interpreting the hair of a Mercury from Cirencester (no. 33) as 'Celtic patterning' when, in the very next sentence, Mediterranean parallels for the 'schematization of the curled hair' are adduced as evidence for the figure's date. One cannot have it both ways. Discussion of an object's origins is also insufficiently rigorous to be illuminating. Its standpoint, too often, is that wholly classical bronzes are imports; stylized features are local work, unless a continental parallel happens to have been found. Naturally, this line of argument fails when one considers objects carved from British stone, and it begs a question fundamental to the thesis, how far British craftsmen achieved classical standards.

Some identifications are disputable. A statuette from Denver, Norfolk (no. 76), is stated to be of Mars on iconographic grounds, though it lacks the god's distinctive attributes. Its boots and tight-fitting cap, admitted to be 'incongruous', the form of the tunic and, indeed, the shorter left leg, are all appropriate to Vulcan. So, too, with the similar figurine from Southbroom (no. 79): what is described as a baldric is surely the fold of his tunic. Comments on a relief of Mercury from Newcastle (no. 26) should be compared with the entry in E. J. Phillips, *CSIR Great Britain I.1* (1977); not cited, though published in the year before Lindgren revised her text. Phillips (no. 205) notes the seated ram and the cock which she implies to be absent, though they are discernible on her pl. 26. Two of her

three cited Gaulish *comparanda* (Espérandieu 4685, 4696) bear little resemblance to it in detail. Lindgren refers to 'Mediterranean norms', Phillips identifies the Praxitelean and Polyclitan features. She dates it late first or second century; he considers it to be of second- or third-century date.

Good criteria for the stylistic dating of Romano-British sculpture may not exist, but Lindgren's seem particularly unsatisfactory. Frequently, the only authority cited is Jocelyn Toynbee's monograph on *The Hadrianic School* (1934), invoking much too crudely the 'idealization' which Toynbee identified as one characteristic of Hadrianic art. At other times, also, metropolitan art is used to date provincial art with too little argument and discrimination.

The final analyses and conclusions are brief, and rely greatly on two flow charts. The conclusion is that Romano-British interpretations (defined as those with mixed Mediterranean and Celtic characteristics), representing a synthesis of the two traditions, spread during the process of Romanization, with a major change of taste in their favour during the third century. Since this depends on the validity of the dating, according to which the second chart is arranged, and of the stylistic analysis, and both of them are questionable, the conclusion must remain unproven. It is weakened by the fact that the author has not considered all known instances of her four chosen deities, without offering grounds to justify her claim (p. 4) to have made a 'representative sampling', a 'typical selection of objects'. As a compendium, the book has its uses; it is well-illustrated, and at least one-fifth of the 92 items were previously unpublished. Any user of the analysis, however, should be warned that the ascent to Parnassus of the Celtic Muse requires a paving more solid than good intentions.

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Report on the Excavations at Usk 1965–1976; The Fortress Excavations 1968–1971. By W. H. Manning. University of Wales Press, 1981. Pp. xvii + 233, 96 figs., 46 pls. Price: £15.95. ISBN 0 7083 0774 4.

When Dr Manning began his major campaign of excavations at Usk in 1965 the pattern of legionary dispositions in Britain in the Claudio-Neronian period appeared to be relatively simple and clear cut. The available historical and epigraphic evidence suggested the movement of Legion XX from Colchester to Gloucester in A.D. 49 as a prelude to the campaigns of Ostorius Scapula against the tribes of Wales, and its subsequent transfer to Wroxeter in 66/67 consequent upon Nero's removal of Legion XIV from Britain; this theory was consistent with such meagre archaeological evidence as could then be brought to bear upon the problem. In the 17 years that have since elapsed our picture of Roman campaigning in Britain has had to be significantly modified, partly as a result of the discovery of new sites, partly as a result of the excavation of sites then known but not properly understood. Notable in this latter category is Usk. When Manning began his excavations the nature of the military establishment at Usk was entirely uncertain: a fort (or forts) was known to exist but its date was unclear and its size unknown. Ten seasons of excavation have now revealed an establishment of an estimated 19.475 ha or 48 acres (the position of its western defences has yet to be proved by excavation), founded in the 50s, probably in the earlier rather than the later half of the decade, and continuing in full occupation until the late 60s when it was maintained by a reduced establishment until its demolition in the early to mid-70s.

The ten seasons of excavations on which these conclusions are based are being published in a series of monographs of which the volume under review is the first to appear on the structural evidence: a report by Dr Kevin Greene on the pre-Flavian fine wares was published in 1979, while that on the coins and graffiti appeared in 1982. How many more volumes there are to be and how the remaining material is to be divided is nowhere stated, though an indication as to its scope is given in the introductory notes (p. 63). The present volume serves as a general introductory volume to the series as well as being the report on the excavations carried out between 1968 and 1971 (excluding, therefore, the work done in the first three and the last five seasons, notably the major site dug in 1973–4). This chronological division has not, however, been strictly adhered to, so that the title of the volume is not an entirely accurate indication of its content. The defences, for example, were excavated over a number of years, some falling within the theoretical time-limit of this volume, some falling outside. They clearly form a coherent structural unit and are, sensibly, dealt with as such, the report on them including, as appropriate, material from the 1972, 3 and 4 seasons – so, too, in the case of the road-