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FELIX MÜLLER (Hrsg.), *Kunst der Kelten (700 v. Chr.–700 n. Chr.)*. Ausstellungskatalog Historisches Museum Bern, Landesmuseum Württemberg Stuttgart. Mercatorfonds, Brussels 2009. € 42,-. English edition: ISBN 978-90-6153-864-6; German edition: ISBN 978-3-03823-500-2; French edition: ISBN 978-3-3823-501-9. 304 pages with 406 figures¹.

It is more than twenty years since that archaeological block-buster of all time, “I Celti: la prima Europa”, held in the Palazzo Grassi in Venice and accompanied by a massive multi-authored catalogue (S. MOSCATI ET AL., *The Celts* [Milano 1991]) heralded a new age of major exhibitions devoted to the European Iron Age. And now, in cooperation with Thomas Hoppe of the Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart, it is the turn of Switzerland and the Historisches Museum Bern to present a healthy mix of old and new material.

Bern and Stuttgart make a natural pair for the study of the material culture of the Iron Age and it has been the intention of Felix Müller, Deputy Director of the Historisches Museum, chief author of “Art of the Celts” and responsible for its overall conception, to make the publication free-standing, not dependent on the exhibition. As with all the – extensive – trilingual documentation in the exhibition, the decision has been taken to publish the book simultaneously in three languages. But unlike its predecessors, the book lacks even the briefest of check-lists referring to the 450 objects which made up the display. A “Catalogue” there is, in which Müller is joined by a dozen collaborators notably M. A. Guggisberg but, to quote André Malraux, this is a kind of “musée imaginaire” comprising some forty Masterpieces of Celtic art keyed in to the main text (pp. 168–267). Personally, we think this exclusion rule is a mistake, but on the positive side it has allowed the inclusion of a number of major works which, for a number of reasons, some good and some not so good, were not available for display.

To begin at the beginning, following an overall chronological chart (pp. 20–21), seven sections interspersed with high-lit areas containing contemporary quotations and detailed comments commence with “Who were the Celts? What is Art?” (pp. 22–51). Müller takes as his opening text the story of Helico, that pioneering Celtic craftsman in Italy (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 7,5) and puts forward the persuasive argument that “craft” rather than “art” is the key word in studying Celtic material culture, and it may be noted that, despite being unconsciously bound by the methodology of the Classical archaeologist where “art” is considered to need no explanation, Jacobsthal entitles the key concluding chapter of his fundamental study “Celtic crafts, their origin and connexions” (P. F. JACOBSTHAL, *Early Celtic art* [Oxford 1944] ch. 6). Indeed, it could be argued that “Craftmanship of the Celts” would have been a better title for both the present book and exhibition.

Following the recent war of words concerning the validity – or otherwise – of the terms “Celt” and “Celtic” in the ancient world (compare R. MEGAW / V. MEGAW, *Do the Ancient Celts still live? An essay on identity and contextuality*. *Studia Celtica* 31, 1997, 107–123; J. R. COLLIS, *The Celts origins, myths inventions* [Stroud 2003]) Müller treads a middle road. While briefly flirting with the theory of an ultimate origin of “proto-Celts” in the third millennium BC echoing an even earlier starting point as advanced many years ago by C. RENFREW, *Archaeology and languages: the puzzle of Indo-European origins* (London 1987) ch. 9, he concludes: “... it is highly unlikely, based on the sources available, that Celts ever possessed an all-embracing identity [...] it follows that ‘Celtic art’ should also be viewed in a wider sense as a craft culture with stylistic idiosyncrasies that emerged and were developed on the north-western frontiers of the ancient world” (p. 49).

“At the sources of the River Danube: 7th to 5th centuries BC” heralds five chapters of narrative extending from Ha C to the 4th century AD and concluding with “The British Isles and Ireland:

¹ References throughout are to the English edition.

from the beginning of the Common Era to the 8th Century AD". Commencing with a description of the élite barrow cemeteries of Ha C, the presentation is clear with a judicious selection of descriptive text and illustration suffering only occasionally from over-compression and under-explanation, as with the throw-away line concerning "Fürstensitze" and "Fürstengrab": "the terms 'princely seat' and 'princely tomb' have aroused much controversy amongst scholars" (p. 57: see D. KRAUSSE [ed.], *Frühe Zentralisierungs- und Urbanisierungsprozesse. Forsch. u. Ber. Vor- u. Frühgesch. Baden-Württemberg* 101 [Stuttgart 2008] – cited in the "Catalogue" p. 192). Notwithstanding, the period of expansion which seems to have occurred c.600 BC is illustrated by reference to sites such as Bourges, Camp-du-Château and the Heuneburg.

The latter part of this opening section argues for an élite modelled on Etruscan aristocracy and reviews the two-way trade in exotic goods and raw materials. On the other hand it is good to read the note of caution concerning the claims for the presence of Chinese silk north of the Alps (p. 65–66), while on the subject of gold as a main bartering source a useful reference would have been B. CAUJET, *L'or dans l'antiquité de la mine à l'objet. Aquitania Suppl. 9* (Bordeaux 1999). With regard to finished goods attention is drawn to the route from the Main to Lake Geneva and the Jura to Bavaria as a zone of cultural unity in the seventh and sixth centuries marked by a somewhat monotonous use of geometric designs offset by the near-constant import of exotic goods from the south; Müller is again surely right in suggesting that at least in this period the foreign iconography had little emphasis. The section ends with comments on a group of more or less contemporary late sixth-century pieces which indicate Mediterranean influence: the lions on the Hochdorf cauldron, the Hirschlanden statue, the Vix "diadem" – *recte* torc – and the pair of silvered bronze arm-rings with plant ornaments engraved on gold cuffs from a woman's burial at Unterlunkhofen, Kt. Zürich. The ready adoption firstly north of the Alps of the basic safety-pin brooch type, and subsequently the appearance in northern Italy of imported versions contrasts with the slow impact made by southern forms on local art styles.

With the following section, "Italy, the Balkans and Asia Minor: 5th to 3rd centuries BC", Müller comes to the pivotal part of his narrative. Following such authors as Ludwig Pauli and Rudolf Echt but without offering a specific explanation, he designates the mid fifth century BC as a period of profound cultural change and artistic development extending from Champagne to Bohemia. Around 400 BC there was a change to flat graves with marked concentrations of cemeteries in the Marne and in the area surrounding Bern. The identification of regional and temporal variations in women's jewellery has been a particular feature of recent analysis of grave goods and Müller gives the reader a succinct if breathless summary of Celtic expansion from Britain to Belgrade which has suffered somewhat from over-compression and under-illustration – reference to some recent publications might have helped the enquiring reader, for example the various contributions to D. VITALI (ed.), *Celtes et Gaulois: l'archéologie face à l'histoire. La préhistoire des Celtes. Bibracte 12 / 2* (Glux-en-Glenne 2006) and M. SZABÓ (ed.), *Celtes et Gaulois: l'archéologie face à l'histoire. Les civilisés et les barbares du V^e au II^e siècle avant J.-C. Bibracte 12, 3* (Glux-en-Glenne 2006) and, invaluable for Transylvania and the Balkans: A. RUSTOIU, *Războinici și societate în aria celtică Transilvăneană – Warriors and society in Celtic Transylvania. Interferențe Etnice și Culturale în Mileniile I a. Chr.– I p. Chr. 13* (Cluj-Napoca 2008). More straightforward is a summary of the Celtic settlement of northern Italy (pp. 88–92) – a delightful vignette is a relief fragment from Ostia showing the Capitoline geese in full alarm mode (fig. 87) – and the historically attested eastward migrations into the Balkans and across the Hellespont.

Reverting to more central and western areas, the point is well taken that, while occasional wealthy graves are to be found in the flat cemetery region, it is noticeable that there is a virtual absence of exotic imports save for raw materials such as glass and amber – native craftsmen have now replaced

the need for imported prestige goods. Müller now turns to an over-view of Jacobsthal's main styles of early Celtic art (pp. 96–113). Once more this is a well balanced and illustrated summary of the latest views with some of the newest finds emphasising that the Early style(s) developed without any direct link with Italy or Greece, though it will come as no surprise that we continue to deny Scythian influence in the early phases of what is not so much a style but a number of regional variants (V. MEGAW, Early Celtic art without Scythians? A review. In: H. Dobrzanska / V. Megaw / P. Poleska (eds.), *Celts on the margin: Studies in European cultural interaction 7th century BC – 1st century AD* dedicated to Zenon Woźnizk [Kraków 2005] 33–47). Greek-influenced plant motifs and compass ornament find their place – though the probability that the Schwarzenbach gold “cup” may have been intended to decorate a drinking horn could have been added to the caption to fig. 115 and the separate compass based ornament that forms an individual regional development in western Bohemia is omitted.

In considering the Waldalgesheim style – Müller sticks to Jacobsthal's labelling in preference to Stephane Verger's “style végétal” – its restricted dating to the fourth century BC is surely over-conservative and conflicts with the statement that decorated brooches from Münsingen range from c. 380 to “two or three generations later” (pp. 106–107); also a cautious line is taken over the birth-place of the style with Italy on balance taking second place. Only a few pages are devoted to Jacobsthal's “Plastic” and “sword styles” (pp. 108–113), perhaps not enough to emphasise such features as regional products of sword-smiths against the ubiquitous variations on the the so-called “dragon-pair” motif (see now N. GINOUX, *Le theme symbolique de “la paire de dragons” sur les fourreaux celtiques [IV^e–II^e siècles avant J.-C.]*. Etude iconographique et typologie. BAR Internat. Ser. 1702 [Oxford 2007]).

Lastly to be noted in this section are the first signs of insular La Tène craftsmanship. Perhaps these deserved rather more than a few marginal images and a not entirely accurate couple of sentences (pp. 111; 113 fig. 144), though as elsewhere there are relevant pieces discussed in the “Masterpieces” section.

“At the heart of Europe” deals with the impact of Rome on the Celtic world and offers a telling account of the completion of cultural convergence by military force while summarising the main features of LT D – the growth (and in southern Germany the early demise) of the *oppida*, of religious sites and of social differentiation. In a sub-section devoted to “Art in transition” (pp. 127–137) Müller emphasises the attractions of Hellenistic styles to a Celtic art which, save for largely small-scale depictions of animals, seems to have lost its creative urge. This period of stagnation around 200 BC he attributes to political factors; southern Britain proves an exception, as does the increase in use and production of raw materials, notably glass. Several of the key pieces of the period again find a more extensive treatment in the “Masterpieces” section. It was a particular pleasure of the exhibition as well as the book to view a selection of the extraordinary second century BC painted pottery localised to the region around Clermont-Ferrand (p. 131; 234–237). This too is the hey-day of continental Celtic coinage, while in a single paragraph Celtiberian art is shoe-horned in; Gundestrup – in many ways one of the least “Celtic” pieces in the book – also makes a seemingly statutory appearance.

The narrative is continued in brief sections dealing first with Gaul and Germania in the first three centuries AD (pp. 138–153), then, slightly oddly, the British Isles and Ireland up to the eighth century AD (pp. 154–163) The sparse treatment of artistic endeavours in the former region is no more than it deserves. Clearly capable of extended discussion are the numerous representations of native deities in provincial garb as in the case of the horse-goddess Epona (pp. 260–261). However, what Müller describes as the recovery of art in the first century AD is largely in quantity and not in quality with only the continuing popularity of openwork metalwork incorporating variations of the insular-originating trumpet-scroll giving evidence of the continuity of at least one aspect of the Celtic visual vocabulary.

Continuity and survival particularly from the late sixth century AD in Ireland brings a logical close to the main sections of “Art of the Celts”. Both metalwork and the great series of illuminated Gospel books commencing around AD 700, while exhibiting the new influences of Germanic animal style, continue elements of compass-based decoration which can be traced back to the fine fifth-century BC metalwork of western Europe.

We have left little room for detailed comment on the “Masterpieces” or catalogue section which follows the chronological sweep of the main text. The selection starts with the local Ha C geometric splendours of the pottery from Barrow 1 of the Gomadingen, Kr. Reutlingen cemetery (pp. 172–173). Needless to say the hoard of seven gold rings from Erstfeld, Kt. Uri (pp. 196–199) stars amongst the Swiss pieces – but were these necessarily “made in the Swiss midlands or in south-western Germany”? – and “Masterpieces” suitably ends with the St Gall Gospel book, Codex 51, probably executed in Ireland c. AD 750 and brought to the Celtic monastery established by Gallus on the shores of Lake Constance c. AD 612 (pp. 266–267), thus demonstrating that insular Celtic influence on the Continent is an important feature of the later stages of Celtic culture.

Inevitably, some references might be added to the generally well-documented catalogue entries. Thus, for the Glauberg finds (pp. 190–193) there is now B. PINSKER (ed.), *Der Glauberg in keltischer Zeit. Zum neuesten Stand der Forschung*. Fundber. Hessen Beih. 6 (Wiesbaden 2008). Another coup for the exhibition illustrated in the “Masterpieces” section are the bronzes from Brno-Maloměřice (pp. 214–215) and those from the Maltepe tholos tomb near near Mezek (pp. 220–221). Though the latter appear now to have been over-cleaned, these superb examples of what, tongue-in-cheek, we have christened the “Disney style”, as Müller comments, these have clear affinities to other chariot fittings found in the Paris region, most recently at “La Fosse Cotheret”, Roissy-en-France (Sur la piste des Gaulois [exhibition cat.] [Paris 2000]; L. OLIVIER, *Une nouvelle acquisition au Musée des Antiquités nationales: les tombes à char de Roissy “La Fosse Cotheret” [Val-d’Oise], Ant. Nat. 33, 2001, 19–20*). This evidence of the penetration by the Celts of the Balkans can be extended by the recognition of related bronzes from north-east Bulgaria (see M. CULLIN-MINGAUD ET AL., *Des Thraces aux Ottomans. La Bulgarie à travers les collections des musées de Varna [exhibition cat.] [Lattes, St-Germain-en-Laye 2006] cat. no. 168*). One omission from the text – save from being plotted on the map (p. 290) – and illustrations is anything on the extraordinary five war-trumpets (*carnyces*) from the sanctuary of Tintignac (Corrèze), one of which had pride of place in the exhibition (see C. MANIQUET, *Le dépôt culturel du sanctuaire gaulois de Tintignac à Naves [Corrèze]. Gallia 65, 2008, 273–326*).

After the “Masterpieces” section there follow 101 motifs comprising a “Pattern Book of Celtic Art” not so much in the manner of Jacobsthal’s more detailed “List of patterns” as following I. STEAD/ K. HUGHES, *Early Celtic designs* (London 1997) (pp. 268–287); these are keyed in to the main text and are then followed by – praise be, if oddly placed before the “Selected Sources and Literature” – an “Index of Sites” with its attendant map of “Major Sites of Celtic Archaeology”; this last lacks a scale as do all other maps in this book (p. 290–293). As to the “Selected sources”, despite additional individual entries in the “Masterpieces” section, this is a bit sparse and again oddly omits reference to any of the preceding exhibition publications with the exception of the Venice catalogue; surely better integration and a few more in-text references would not have detracted from the volume’s general appeal.

But we do not intend to draw attention to the – inevitable – occasional minor error or dispute some of the various contributors’ points of view. Instead, we have noted above a few additional references which might find a place in any reissue of “Art of the Celts”. Certainly, we must not omit mention of Sandy Hämmerle, translator of the English edition of “Art of the Celts”. Comparison with the German version confirms that this is a near-faultless model of what such translations should

be where general sense and idiom take pride of place over the slavishly literal. Likewise, design by poste 4 of Strasbourg – including the telling logo and jacket design combining the Agris (Charente) gold helmet and one of the Donore, Co. Meath tinned bronze discs – and printing by Die Keure, Bruges are of the highest standard.

The best summary of “Art of the Celts” is provided by Müller himself: “[Celtic] ornamentation never strived to depict nature and the world realistically – quite the contrary. Plants, humans and animals were dissected into their individual components and reconstituted, altered and abstracted, distorted and disguised. Celtic ornamentation developed from simple to highly complex structures, the origins and context of which were revealed only to an initiated few. This placed a complete contrast to Greek ornamentation which was never enciphered. Celtic art never manifested itself obviously to the viewer. It was elitist, and that is the reason why for far too long there has been a failure to appreciate it” (p. 169). We could not agree more and this book should go a long way to righting the situation.

In terms of an overall introduction to the European Iron Age and later Celtic art, with the “Catalogue” offering insightful commentaries on a selection from 1500 years of masterpieces of Celtic craftsmanship, this must be a “best buy”.

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ERWIN STRAHL / FRIEDERIKE BUNGENSTOCK / JOHANNES EY / HAUKE JÖNS / STEFFEN WOLTERS, Probleme der Küstenforschung im südlichen Nordseegebiet Band 32. Isensee Verlag, Oldenburg 2008. € 45,-. ISBN 978-3-89995-620-7. 312 Seiten mit zahlreichen Abbildungen.

Der vom Niedersächsischen Institut für historische Küstenforschung herausgegebene 32. Band der Reihe ist laut Vorwort letztmalig unter diesem Titel erschienen. Die Formulierung „Probleme der Küstenforschung“ wird künftig zweisprachig durch „Siedlungs- und Küstenforschung“ bzw. „Settlement and Coastal Research“ ersetzt, eine Formulierung, die den Bogen weiter spannt und nicht mehr ausschließlich auf das engere Arbeitsgebiet des Instituts zielt. Der frühere Direktor W. Haio Zimmermann hatte in seinen Forschungen schon lange neben den Spezifika der Küstenregion grundlegende Fragestellungen der allgemeinen Siedlungsforschung aufgegriffen und dabei auf einen interdisziplinären Ansatz großen Wert gelegt. Dementsprechend bringt der erste Teil des vorliegenden Bandes die Beiträge eines Kolloquiums, das 2002 unter der Leitung Zimmermanns in Wilhelmshaven stattgefunden hat. Das Thema lautete: „Neue Wege zu altem Bauen – Interdisziplinäre Forschungen zum Thema Haus.“ Die zehn Beiträge sind in zwei Gruppen unterteilt und zwar in „Haus und Umwelt“ sowie „Das ländliche Haus im Mittelalter“. Der Volkskundler Hermann Kaiser ist dabei gleich in jeder Themengruppe mit einem Beitrag vertreten. Der erste greift ein bereits 1974–1975 durchgeführtes, seinerzeit allerdings von der Fachwelt kaum beachtetes Experiment des Cloppenburgers Freilichtmuseums wieder auf. Bei diesem interessanten Experiment hatte man in einem noch am originalen Standort befindlichen und immer noch unter den Bedingungen des 19. Jahrhunderts bewirtschafteten und beheizten Bauernhaus (niederdeutsches Hallenhaus) einen Winter lang ausgedehnte Temperaturmessungen durchgeführt. Ein wichtiger Aspekt war dabei – neben der Ermittlung von absoluten Werten – die Wärmeverteilung, und zwar nicht nur bezogen