

G. Haseloff: Die Germanische Tierornamentik der Völkerwanderungszeit. Studien zu Salin's Stil I. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981. Vol. 1: XXIV, 280 pp; Vol. 2: XVI, 430 pp.; Vol. 3: VIII, 66 pp., 528 illustrations, 99 tables. DM 580.

This major work, published in three volumes, represents a new and comprehensive treatment of Germanic 'Style I' animal ornamentation of the fifth and sixth centuries AD, its birth and development in southern Scandinavia, and its spread in continental Europe as far south as the Alamanni and Langobards. Publication has long been promised (the manuscript in essentially its present form dates to 1969-73 and the foreword was written in 1978), and as a result some recent references could not be included. Of greater concern is the fact that several aspects of the author's conclusions have already been made known in preliminary publications, and that these have, to some extent, been further disseminated, sometimes in oversimplified form. This definitive publication therefore is now gratefully accepted, for it makes possible a detailed discussion of the author's views.

The study briefly discusses Roman 'chip-carved' bronzes, and the adoption of their running spirals and border ornamentation with animal figures on Saxon fibulae, which abound in the regions at the mouths of the Weser and Elbe. At the period in

question the development was interrupted by the migration of large populations of Saxons to England. Elsewhere, corresponding features appear in southern Scandinavia, where the 'Nydam Style' becomes the foundation for Style I in the fifth century AD. The marine creatures typical of the Nydam Style, and derived from Roman prototypes, are replaced in the late fifth century by four-footed animals, the major parts of whose bodies are accentuated by contour lines. With this change, the step has clearly been made to Germanic Style I as Salin wished to define it.

Haseloff next proceeds to a group of fibulae, the origin of which he seeks in Jutland. All the existing 15 assemblages are involved, amongst them the well-known finds from Galstad, Finglesham, Bifrons Grave 41, Engers, Grave 71 at Basel-Kleinhüningen and Grave 78 at Donzdorf. Only four examples come from Jutland itself; by contrast five come from Kent. The scarcity of Jutish examples may be explained by the manner of deposition: all come from hoards (frequently associated with bracteates), and are regarded as sacrificial. In seeking an exclusively western Scandinavian origin for the group, the author runs counter to widespread opinion which reckons upon a centre in Kent. The distribution of the fibulae is discussed with that of the bracteates, whose Scandinavian origin is undisputed. The ornamentation and artistic motifs of this group are discussed with exemplary clarity, and the question of dating is also argued.

By considering the subject of the 'Jutland fibulae group' the author is already deeply involved in the characterization of Style I. This is followed by a systematic discussion of other metalwork of this stylistic phase from Scandinavia: cast and pressed-metalwork, and filigree. Of great significance is the division of Style I into four stylistic phases A-D. Phase A is considered to be the beginning of the development, with compact animal representations which occur predominantly along borders. Characteristic of phase B are flat animals (i.e., not modelled in the round) with bodies decorated with hatching between contour lines. By contrast, in Phase C the representation of the body area loses prominence and instead the contour lines assume significance; in stylistic phase D this evolves into ribbon-shaped animal bodies. It is important to note that this division is intended not so much as an inflexible chronological scheme, but as one with great temporal overlaps between phases which are referable to different traditions of craftsmanship. Not only are objects representing different styles found together in the same assemblage (e.g., Sösdala, Snartemo), but there are even cases where single pieces contain elements of several styles. It

is also clear that there are regional differences: style B centres in the Baltic area, while style D is more pronounced in southwestern Scandinavia.

In the second volume, the occurrence further south on the continent of bow-shaped fibulae of Scandinavian type is discussed. Deciding whether, in any individual case, a fibula is a Scandinavian export or local copy is often subjective. Even when the author fully appreciates such problems and when he can sometimes cite further criteria, such as details in ornamentation, etc., his opinion, in the main, is based upon the quality of decoration. In addition, the migration of Scandinavian artists in the first, formative phase is taken into account. Comparatively few examples of such fibulae of northern type are dispersed among the Franks of the Rhine and Mosel, the Thuringians, the Alamanni and the Langobards. But any real adoption of Style I is found only among the Alamanni and Langobards. Two separate contributory influences may be assumed for this, since in typically Alamannic works characteristics exist which, in the main, derive from southwestern Scandinavian stylistic phase D, whereas those of phase B, at home further east, are found among the Langobards.

Especially important is the detailed discussion of the introduction of Mediterranean interlace-ornamentation north of the Alps, and its fusion with the existing Germanic style to form Style II. Style II is defined—not so much as by Salin, with the aid of the details of the animal motifs (heads, limbs and feet)—but by new compositions which are founded upon interlace arrangements and the laws of symmetry as J. Werner has already suggested. According to the author, the ribbon-style animal ornamentation of style D admirably suits this transitional process. Arguing from a range of evidence, he attempts to prove this progression in the territory of the Alamanni, a development which must already have been underway by the middle of the sixth century. That comparable changes took place in the area occupied by the Langobards (as suggested especially by H. Roth) is not excluded.

This third volume contains contributions by B. Arrhenius, S. Ch. Hawkes, W. Krause, E. Nau and D. Reimann, relating to technical details and to find-complexes important for dating purposes (but which had not been published in full at the time the manuscript was submitted), as well as the runic inscription on the fibula from Donzdorf. Here also is an addendum by the author on the fibula fragment from Idstedt in Schleswig.

The index is very welcome, for through it the subject matter of the book can easily be located. This is all the more important because there is no separate catalogue of sites and finds. As in the works

of Salin and others who have dealt with the Germanic animal style, descriptions of objects have been incorporated directly into the text. With the enormous scope of the present investigation, liveliness of presentation suffers and there is sometimes a tedious minuteness of detail. Alongside such exactness of observations, it is equally apparent how very much the grouping of objects and their relationships with one another are seen in evolutionary terms. But, in the end, close attention to detail contributes to the great value of this publication; as do the numerous and precise drawings of finds with the accompanying illustrations of individual motifs. The interpretation of well-known pieces is thereby almost always enhanced. The book, then, provides a research tool of the first order.

The investigation is restricted, in the main, to a discussion of motifs and styles. Only rarely are historical problems, which are raised by the interpretations, adverted to. Here it would have been interesting to know more fully the author's line of reasoning. How to explain, for example, the fact that there are pairs of fibulae within the 'Jutland fibulae group' from Basel-Kleinhüningen Grave 74 and Donzdorf Grave 78? They are likely to be southern Scandinavian products (Donzdorf with its northern runic inscription!). But in Scandinavia the precious metal fibulae—simply on the basis of their deposition?—are only individually attested to.

The author argues that on many occasions northern craftsmen had been active in the south, e.g., in the territory of the Alamanni. The problem of the mobility of craftsmen, or of workshops, and their general social context has been discussed more than once in recent years. So the complexity of this entire range of questions has been strongly emphasized. For this reason alone one would like to have seen this topic, central to the argument, being the subject of more precise elaboration, which would have explored more vigorously the historical as well as the social presuppositions of the subject.

It has very often been shown that the Germanic Animal-Style I was rendered over-simplistically or in a most distorted fashion outside Scandinavia: 'The artists, bewildered and helpless, balked at the Nordic animal decoration'. Therefore it is not a question merely of pure decoration, but of representations which had a specific content. It is thus suggested by the author that northern Germanic images were not sufficiently intelligible to other Germanic peoples. To what extent is this true? In part, have not only formal details been abbreviated, while the composition as a whole remained comprehensible? And have not the ideas which are embodied in the motifs characteristic of other Germanic artistic spheres also

contributed to these changes? Numerous are the reflexions one would like to make here, perhaps in the comparison of bracteates, the eagle symbolism of which comes from the east, etc.

The opinions enunciated on the chronology of the Germanic artifacts are also very important. The author champions very high chronological estimates. He would like to prove these through his repeated attempts to differentiate between objects long in use before burial, and those which were relatively new when placed in the ground. In recent years discussion of such questions has progressed considerably, but here is not the place to discuss details in relation to the deliberations of the author.

The preceding comments attempt to show that the present work provides an abundance of thought-provoking points which lead far beyond consideration of the art style. The complete documentation offers an opportunity to pursue such questions in earnest. For any future work on animal ornamentation, this publication seems therefore indispensable.

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