

Peter Karl Schmidt and Colin B. Burgess, *The Axes of Scotland and Northern England*. Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Abteilung IX, Band 7. C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, München 1981. XI und 297 Seiten, 153 Tafeln.

The trio of volumes which started the PBF series in 1969 included the first volume on axes (IX, 1), which covered the Early Bronze Age in Ireland. We may now heartily welcome the appearance twelve years later of the seventh volume in the series which deals with the axes of much of the culturally-related Highland Zone of Britain, as defined by Cyril Fox more than half a century ago, namely Scotland and Northern England. It is certainly an example of international co-operation at its best, despite the geographical distance between the two co-authors, who are to be congratulated on having produced a well-written and harmonious whole in which the separate contributions fit remarkably well together.

When compared to PBF IX, 1, this latest axe corpus by Schmidt and Burgess (abbreviated to S/B below) is a bigger book in size and scope. Firstly, it gives more detailed information about each individual specimen, such as measurements, weight, colour and the nature of the associated finds. Secondly, it is more detailed in its subdivisions of the material which is broadly comparable in the lands on both sides of the North Channel, and provides a more subtle chronological discussion of each type, and it has the further advantage of being able to compare the insular material with that from the Iberian Peninsula contained in Monteagudo's corpus of 1976 (PBF IX, 6). Thirdly, it does not confine itself to the Early Bronze Age, but covers the entire Bronze Age, although the actual number of specimens is less than that of the Early Bronze Age in Ireland alone. Indeed, as the authors point out, this is the "first attempt to produce a complete corpus of axes of all phases from a large region of the British Isles". As the final page of the book shows, the tesserae forming the map of Europe are gradually coming together to form a coherent mosaic, and an understanding of the material covered in the present volume will doubtless be further facilitated when companion volumes appear covering southern Britain, northern France, the Low Countries and Scandinavia. But the authors' extensive and advantageous knowledge of the finds from these areas, as demonstrated in this volume, should mean that the picture presented here will scarcely need to be altered too greatly when these companion volumes appear, which we may hope they will do in the not too far distant future.

Obviously, such a volume presents a number of difficulties, not least of which is the length of time it takes between the original assemblage of the text and its final publication. The references to published material only go up to sometime in 1979, as is evident from the lack of page numbers for material in the Proceedings of the Fifth Atlantic Colloquium which appeared at the end of that year and which contained, among others, Colin Burgess's article on "The background of early metalworking in Ireland and Britain" mentioned in the bibliography, and which should be read in conjunction with the present volume.

Another difficulty faced by anyone dealing with the axes of Britain and Ireland is the bewildering variety of shapes and, more particularly, the number of "hybrid" outlines which make clean subdivision into types all the more difficult. Only the schooled eye would be able to see much difference, for instance, between the two types represented by Nos. 5 and 7 on Plate 1 of the present volume. PBF IX, 1 created larger groupings of material, based generally on the chronological limits imposed by the comparative paucity of material in associated finds, which are largely made up of hoards. In contrast, S/B opt for a much more detailed division, thereby creating (in many cases) newly-named types which, to the uninitiated, may appear bewildering, particularly when taken in conjunction with the nomenclature of differing groupings proposed for the same material by previous authors. Yet, while producing what in the future will probably be seen as the definitive nomenclature, S/B have, nevertheless, tried to keep confusion to a minimum, though some might shake

their heads at approximately 1765 axes being divided into about 130 types or variants, giving an average of only about 14 specimens for each, some of which have only one or two examples. Such detailed subdivisions can, however, only help us towards a more exact chronology for each piece, and should make it easier for museum cataloguers and scholars of the future to identify more precisely each new axe that comes to light. Some of the types listed here as having only one or a few examples are, in fact, often outliers of larger groups whose main concentration lies elsewhere, and the authors' knowledge of the material from outside their own chosen area has enabled them to name the type not after the findspot of the piece found in their area, but after the most characteristic find of the main grouping, even though this may lie outside their area. It also helps, of course, to point up likely imports into the area covered by this volume.

One of the main difficulties with the material covered is one which Ireland also has to face, namely the comparative lack of associated finds. Hoards, where present, often contain only one type (though this improves as the Bronze Age progresses), and grave-finds are remarkable for their rarity. These circumstances have led the authors to adopt a sequence of axe development which must rest largely on typology and which is, as S/B freely admit, therefore theoretical. The inherent problems which can result are highlighted in the very first copper axe type dealt with, Type Castletown Roche. This is a copper axe type with straight sides and a thick butt, and belongs to the earliest stratum of copper axes in central and northern Europe (e.g. Altheim and Bygholm). Only six examples of the type are known in the region covered in this book, and the authors suggest that their technology may have been introduced from Ireland, where they are found in much greater numbers and where they are stated to make up about 30% of the axes described as Type Lough Ravel by PBF IX, 1. Because the Castletown Roche Type corresponds to that of the earliest copper axes on the neighbouring continental landmass, S/B plausibly assume that Castletown Roche is the earliest type in Ireland and Scotland. Indeed, for S/B, the axes of Castletown Roche Type constitute the only axe type of their Stage I of the metalworking industry in the British Isles. Typical of their Stage II are axes of Type Lough Ravel/Minto — but it is axes of this latter type which are the only finds accompanying Type Castletown Roche in hoards, as in the eponymous Castletown Roche hoard itself. Thus, while Type Castletown Roche axes are only found in association with Stage II axes, they are nevertheless assumed to be the sole Type of Stage I. Despite this apparent paradox, S/B's assumption of the primacy of Type Castletown Roche axes is quite reasonable, but there are no insular associated finds to support it. S/B's Stage I metalwork is, therefore, perhaps better viewed at the moment as little more than hypothetical until further support for its existence can be found.

From these hypothetically primary axes of Castletown Roche Type, S/B may well be correct in envisaging a subsequent multilineal development of other axe types, without too marked an influence from the Continent. The other earliest type in Scotland and Northern England, S/B's Type Grootown/Milton Moss, finds its closest counterparts in Wales and the Marches, so that the earliest axe technology in Scotland and Northern England seems to have drawn its inspiration from a variety of directions — south and west. The connections which S/B point out with the Iberian Peninsula — no matter which way they went — are interesting, but it may be little more than a forlorn hope that France would produce material which would be in a position to demonstrate whether the influences went from north to south, or vice-versa — or even both.

S/B are probably justified in rejecting the nature of some of objects described in PBF IX, 1 as "Ingots" — despite the intentional inverted commas. From the purely typological point of view, they are also certainly correct in defining more narrowly some of the types which were grouped more generously in PBF IX, 1 under the Type or Sub-type names Lough

Ravel, Ballybeg and Derryniggin, which are given more precise nomenclature in the present volume. More careful subdivision can also help towards a finer chronology, and it is interesting to find a reconsideration of the dagger from the Killaha hoard providing some indications for the chronological priority of Type Killaha axes over those grouped in PBF IX, 1 under the heading Ballyvalley — something which was little more than a “hunch” in 1969.

This brief review has concentrated on looking at the Scottish/Northern English axes of the Early Bronze Age from an Irish point of view, as a complete corpus of similar material is already available from there. It is perhaps preferable to leave discussion of the later material in this work until companion volumes appear for Southern Britain and for the later axes from Ireland — a consummation devoutly to be wished. But whenever these do appear, it is quite clear that the meticulous (though doubtless often tedious) recording, and even more meritorious subdivision and presentation, of the material in evidence here will have laid the necessary groundwork and provide a very welcome stimulus for them.

Loughshinny

Peter Harbison

**Helga Seeden, *The Standing Armed Figurines in the Levant*. Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Abteilung I, Band I. C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, München 1980, VI und 169 Seiten; 139 Tafeln.**

Von der in der Levante außerordentlich zahlreichen anthropomorphen Kleinplastik in Metall aus dem 2. Jahrtausend greift Verf. in diesem Band den am häufigsten vertretenen Typ heraus, klar definiert als „stehend und bewaffnet“. Der Katalog umfaßt 1832 Nummern; Verf. ist mit unendlicher Akribie in allen Fällen den oft nur schlecht dokumentierten Fundumständen nachgegangen, bei Stücken aus dem Kunsthandel auch der genauen Provenienz, was bei Echtheitsfragen oft sehr aufschlußreich ist (zur regen Händler- und Fälschertätigkeit von J. Durighello vgl. S. 1; 10; 116 f.).

Grundlage der Abhandlung bei typologischen und chronologischen Problemen sind die stratifizierte Hortfunde aus Byblos, an die das übrige Material angeschlossen werden kann. Das Buch ist klar gegliedert und mit Indizes gut zu gebrauchen. Die Figuren werden in zwölf Gruppen zusammengefaßt, die in grob chronologischer Ordnung aufeinanderfolgen. Irreführend und dem im Text sorgfältig Dargelegten oft widersprechend ist allerdings die Chronologietabelle auf Tafel 139. Hier erscheinen die nach Typen oder auch Herkunft zusammengestellten Gruppen in zeitlich eng begrenzten Perioden hintereinander; die gleichzeitigen Gruppen VI (V?)—VII und auch IX—XI folgen aufeinander, so daß eine nicht vorhandene zeitliche Abfolge suggeriert wird; auch Gruppe XII gehört ja keineswegs so eindeutig ins 1. Jahrtausend, überschneidet sich durchaus mit Gruppen IX—XI. Für Fragen der Chronologie sollte diese Übersicht nicht benutzt werden.

Vorangestellt werden die Funde aus Tell el-Judeideh (Gruppe I) und die aus den libanesischen Bergen (Gruppe II), die Verf. plausibel ans Ende des 3. Jahrtausends datiert. Wie alle hier behandelten Figuren halten sie Waffen in den Händen — in der linken meist eine Wurfwanne —, die bei sorgfältig gearbeiteten Stücken aber separat gegossen waren und daher nur selten erhalten sind. Diese Krieger der Gruppe I sind unbekleidet, wie viele der Figuren der Gruppen I—VIII; die der Gruppe II tragen den kurzen Schurz, wie er bei kämpfenden und jagenden Männern üblich ist und sich ab Gruppe IX allgemein durchsetzt. Überzeugende Vergleiche zwischen den Figuren dieser beiden Gruppen — bärtige, gegürtete Männer jeweils zusammen mit einer unbekleideten weiblichen Statuette — sprechen gegen