

A Roman Bronze from Cronton, Merseyside

Glenys Lloyd-Morgan

In February 1985 a small copper-alloy head was discovered by Mr Terry Burns, a metal-detector user, in an area of Cronton, Knowsley District, which had no previous record of Roman finds (Figure 27). The find was brought into Liverpool Museum for identification and the precise findspot notified to Liverpool Museum. Mr Burns retains the object. The find was submitted to Dr G. Lloyd-Morgan of the Grosvenor Museum, Chester for a specialist opinion and her report follows.

'The bronze, which is c. 42mm high, is in the form of a small bust. The truncation includes part of the shoulders and part of the upper section of the chest in a rounded curve. It is cut away at the back, and in the hollow concave section there is the remnant of a tang with rectangular cross section. As much of the surface has become heavily eroded most of the features have been lost, although the hairline and angle of the jaw can be discerned. A slight moulding at the base of the truncation suggests that there might have been a stylised band of draperies here. The figure was prob-

ably male as there are no suggestions of an elaborate feminine hairstyle or jewellery, nor is there any trace of a wreath or coronet which might have survived to indicate whether a god or a mortal was represented. An example, better preserved than this specimen, was excavated at Birrens in an Antonine context (c. 142-155 AD) by Professor Anne Robertson.

It is unfortunate that the Merseyside example is too damaged for full identification of the bust, or even to suggest a date on grounds of style and treatment. However, there are sufficient parallels from the north western provinces of the empire to suggest that it is a decorative fitting of the Roman period, and of a type used to ornament major items of household furniture, possibly even a wagon, or more genteel form of transport.'

The present find gains greater significance in view of the scarcity of Roman metal artefacts from the Merseyside region. The systematic plotting and recording of metal finds such as the present find, together with coins and personal ornaments, will contribute substantially to our understanding of the settlement patterns within the region.

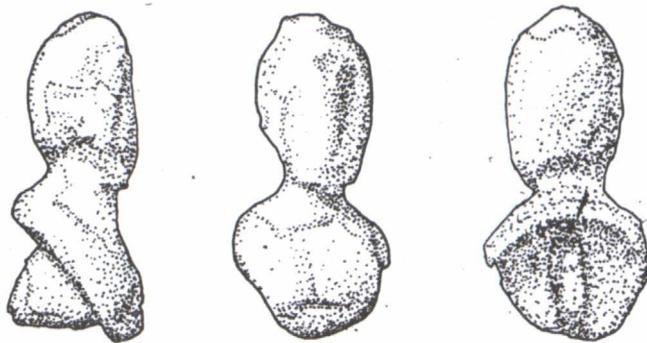


Figure 27: The bronze from Cronton, scale 1:1.