

VI.—GENII CUCULLATI.

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The following abbreviations are used :

AA *Archæologia Aeliana*.

CW Cumberland and Westmorland *Transactions*.

RE Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie*.

In the summer of 1933 the Durham University Excavation Committee discovered an unusual relief, in the civil settlement outside the fort at Housesteads on Hadrian's Wall, which deserves a detailed discussion.¹

1. *Housesteads*:² The relief is a small one, 19½ inches wide, 16 high, and 4½ thick, in a local freestone; it represents three deities of doubtful sex, small in stature, standing erect. They are dressed in loose *cuculli*³ or hooded cloaks, that leave only their faces and their shod feet visible. The face of the middle figure seems to be masculine, those of the other two feminine. This remarkable monument was found in a small shrine, which recalls the cult of the *Penates*; five *denarii*, ranging from A.D. 220-229, were found behind the sculpture, and perhaps give an approximate date for its making: the coins were presumably votive offerings.

¹ My best thanks are due to Mr. Eric Birley, who suggested this article to me, for information and references.

² Cf. AA⁴ XI (1934) 190-1 and pl. xxvii, 1 and 2.

³ On *cucullus* and *birrus* cf. M. Bieber, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der griechischen Tracht* (1934) 42 f.; Daremberg-Saglio, *Dict. des Antiquités*, s.v.; RE s.v.; K. Mautner and V. Geramb, *Steirisches Trachtenbuch* (1933) 155 f.

Three similar monuments, which show a close connection with the Housesteads sculpture, are recorded from sites in Britain :

2. *Carlisle*:⁴ A sculpture found in the castle yard, and now in the collection at Netherhall. Two busts, of deities wearing *cuculli*, are preserved; a third one, which was on the right, is missing. The face of the central figure seems to be masculine, that of the surviving flanking figure feminine, as in no. 1.

3. *Netherby*:⁵ A small relief, formerly in the Graham collection at Netherby, now apparently lost. In this there are three small men standing erect, wearing *cuculli* and close-fitting trousers. The right-hand and middle figures are holding eggs (or perhaps egg-shaped stones, pieces of lead or fruit) in their right hands; the figure on the left probably held the same symbol, but its right hand is missing, according to the published drawings of the relief. The egg (if that is what it is) may represent the Orphic-Bacchic egg, from which that sect derived the world's creation.⁶

4. *Cirencester*:⁷ An unpublished relief, to which Miss M. V. Taylor, F.S.A., has kindly drawn my attention, which represents three figures in profile, all wearing hoods. This sculpture is in the Cripps collection at Cirencester; it is of a local stone, only 11 inches high; the workmanship is very crude.

When we bear in mind that these four reliefs were found in the same country, that the representation of the figures is very much alike in each case, and their dress equally so, we can hardly doubt that they derive from the

⁴ Cf. Hutchinson's *History of Cumberland* II 276; Lysons' *Magna Britannia, Cumberland*, p. clxxxvii; *Lapidarium Septentrionale* 492; Haverfield in *AA*² XV 337, no. 47; Bailey in *CW*² XV 135 f.

⁵ Cf. Hutchinson *op. cit.* II 532; Lysons *op. cit.*, p. clxxxviii; Pennant, *Tour in Scotland* I, pl. xxxv, fig. 4; *Lap. Sep.* 786; *AA*² XV 337, no. 47.

⁶ Cf. Robert-Preller, *Griechische Mythologie* I⁴ 41 f.; L. T. Elferink, *Lekythos* (1934) 49 f., 56 f., 70 f.

⁷ Cf. *JRS* XXIV, p. 198, footnote 6.

same cult. But it is not easy to interpret them solely in the light of Greek and Roman religion under the Principate. One of the figures might represent Telesphorus⁸ with his characteristic dress, and it is possible that a provincial artist might have given this dress to two other sons of Asclepius, for example Machaon and Podaleirius, or Akesis and Euamerion, or to two healing sisters of the cult of Asclepius. But a triad of *Θεοὶ Τελέσφοροι* or *Dei Telesphori*, which on this view must be postulated, is not recorded by ancient writers or known from the numerous inscriptions to Telesphorus hitherto discovered. It seems, therefore, improbable that these reliefs can have any direct connection with the *parhedroi* in the cult of Asclepius.

On the other hand, we do know of Celtic and Gallo-Roman deities clad in the *cucullus*; and it is easier to explain the four British reliefs in the light of them. In the first place, the provenance of the very crude relief no. 4, from a comparatively unromanized district, may suggest that this cult had its origin in Celtic mythology. Secondly, Dr. R. Egger has recently found two large inscribed votive altars in a little temple of typically Celtic style at Wabelsdorf in Carinthia, which are dedicated *genio cucullato*—"to the Cloaked Deity."⁹ The name, first attested by the new inscriptions from Carinthia, is one that we shall probably be justified in supposing to have been applied in the Roman period to the Celtic gods wearing the *cucullus* in Britain also. The great distance intervening is no real obstacle to this view; as in the case of so many other Gallo-Roman deities,¹⁰ we may assume

⁸ Cf. Roscher, *Mythol. Lexicon* s.v.; RE s.v.; Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Glaube der Hellenen* II 471-2; O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie* 1714-5, 1880; Robert-Preller *op. cit.* 521 f.; W. Weber, *Die aegyptischen Terrakotten* I (1914) 225; R. Egger, *Genius Cucullatus*, in *Wiener praehistorische Zeitschrift* 19 (1932) 311-23; K. Kerényi, *Telesphoros*, in *Egyetemes Philologiai Közloeny* 57 (1933) 7-11; *Lap. Sep.* 419.

⁹ Cf. footnote 8 above.

¹⁰ Cf. my articles in RE s.v. *Mars, Matres, Mercurius, Muttergottheiten, Suleviae, Taranis, Tarvos Trigaranus, Tierdämonen.*

that, subject to local variations, the *genii cucullati* were worshipped throughout the Romano-Celtic area.

Dr. Egger, who was the first to show the existence of this cult, has studied it in the light of a quantity of further material; his conclusion is that the *genius cucullatus* was originally the same as the above-mentioned Telesphorus, and that his worship was introduced into Greece by the Galatians from Asia Minor, to spread thence in a fully Hellenized form over a wide area during the first centuries of the present era. But this theory seems less convincing than that of Kerényi,¹¹ who in an interesting and persuasive article has sought to show that the basis of the cult of Telesphorus was entirely Greek and Roman, and that (as with so many gods of the Graeco-Roman pantheon) it would only have been known to the barbarian tribes of the Roman empire in a Greek, Etruscan, or Roman version.

If Kerényi is right, it follows that most of the monuments of Telesphorus, which Egger has taken into consideration in his paper on the inscriptions from Wabersdorf, only represent evidence of Graeco-Roman religion; and if, in some cases, they are descended from Celtic *genii cucullati*, they are entirely romanized descendants. Here, as with so many religious monuments from the Gallo-Roman provinces, the difficulties of interpretation are considerable.¹² But there is another class of monuments (discarded by Egger because they would not fit in with his interpretation), of widespread distribution, portraying deities clad in the *cucullus*, that are probably to be assigned to this native Celtic cult of *cucullati*, as are a number of other interesting sculptures from the western provinces of the empire, which cannot be connected with the worship of

¹¹ Cf. footnote 8 above.

¹² Cf. RE s.v. *Mars* and *Mercurius*; Drexel, *Goetterverehrung im roemischen Germanien*, RGK Bericht XIV (1922) 1 f. Perhaps the terra-cotta of Telesphorus from Trier (Egger's fig. 3) in particular has connections with a native cult, though the representation of the figure does not make that clear.

Telesphorus or of the Gallo-Roman Mercury (who is sometimes shown wearing the *cucullus*).¹³ It is now possible to consider all these sculptures together, and to arrive at a probable interpretation of them. Here it will be sufficient to give a summary description of the monuments that should be attributed, in my opinion, to the cult of the Celtic *genii cucullati*; the consideration of matters of detail must be reserved for discussion elsewhere.

5. *Dhronecken*:¹⁴ A bald-headed dwarf, with beard and moustache, wearing *paenula* and *cucullus* over other garments; he is holding a roll of parchment.

6. *Ibidem*:¹⁵ A dwarf, wearing *paenula* and *cucullus*; the head and upper part of the neck are missing.

7-12. *Heddernheim*,¹⁶ *Wiesbaden*, *Moehn*, *Mannheim*, *Cologne* and *Leens*: A bald-headed man, with a long beard, wearing *paenula* and *cucullus*, and holding a roll of parchment in his right hand. Nos. 8-12 are terra-cottas, which are noteworthy as representing similar figures (in some cases bearded, in others clean-shaven), but it is not certain whether they all have a religious significance.

13. *Moulezan*:¹⁷ A crude sculpture of a god wearing a *cucullus*; beneath the hood a cluster of curls appears.

14-16:¹⁸ A young bearded man, wearing a *cucullus*, walking. The *cucullus* can be removed, exposing a *phallus*. Schmidt cites two similar figures, probably from Gaul, one bearded and the other clean-shaven.

¹³ Cf. RE s.v. *Mercurius*, no. 298 (from Compiègne); s.v. *Tier-daemonen*, N (from Great Thurlow, Cambridgeshire); and a small sculpture from Corstopitum, unpublished: in this, Mercury is wearing a ragged *cucullus* with a round hood; his arms hang stiffly by his sides, and his right hand holds a large bag.

¹⁴ Cf. Hettner, *Drei Tempelbezirke im Trevererland* (1901), p. 74, no. 212a, and pl. XI, 22.

¹⁵ *Loc. cit.*, no. 213, and pl. XI, 20.

¹⁶ Riese, *Festschrift zur Feier des 25-jaehrigen Bestehens des staedtischen historischen Museums in Frankfurt am Main* (1903), p. 77, no. 42, and pl. IV, 9-10.

¹⁷ Cf. Espérandieu, *Recueil général des bas-reliefs de la Gaule romaine* IX, p. 148, no. 6806; Egger's fig. 4.

¹⁸ Reinach, *Repert. de la stat. II*, p. 469, nos. 8-9; Schmidt, *Myth. Lex.* V 317-8, s.v. *Telesphorus*, with bibliography.

17. *Geneva*:¹⁹ A colossus of oak, representing a man wearing a hooded cloak, perhaps a *cucullus*; his right hand may have held a symbol like an egg. This statue was found in the harbour of Geneva, so that it might represent a deity of the lake and of navigation.

18. *Near Lyons, in the territory of the Segusiavi*:²⁰ A coin of the first century B.C., with Hercules (probably to be interpreted as the Celtic Hercules) and a boy wearing the *cucullus* on his right.

19-28f. *Bronze lamps from various sites*:²¹ This "hooded deity," as Loeschcke calls him, appears on a number of bronze lamps, most of which are clearly of Gallo-Roman origin; he is portrayed as a dwarf wearing the *cucullus*, while his large *phallus* serves as the holder for the wick of the lamp. Usually he is standing, bearded (as at Vindonissa, Zara, Autun, Berlin, Lyons, and Bad Bertrich) or clean-shaven (as at Lyons, Rome, and Zugmantel); but there are also seated *cucullati*, bearded, and holding rolls of parchment inscribed with Greek or Latin letters in their hands.

The different groups of monuments listed above do not give us a complete picture of the nature and special qualities of the Gallo-Roman *genii cucullati*, but they do suggest the main lines on which the detailed investigation of the cult should proceed; it may be worth while to point out certain suggestions of syncretism in their worship, though I cannot do more at present than suggest a possible line for future research.

The following remarkable peculiarities, which seem to have been used as characterizing symbols of *genii cucullati*, appear on the four British sculptures (in passing, it is noteworthy that the same peculiarities are met with in the

¹⁹ Cf. Staehelin, *Die Schweiz in roemischer Zeit*² (1931) 507-8 and fig. 145; Krueger, *Trierer Zeitschrift* III (1928) 87; Blondel, *Genava* III (1925) 91 ff.; Mayor, *Anzeiger f. Schweiz. Altertumskunde* (1913) 117 f.

²⁰ Blanchet, *Traité des monnaies gauloises* 425 f. and fig. 468; cf. also Egger, *loc. cit.*, p. 322, with bibliography.

²¹ Loeschcke, *Lampen aus Vindonissa* (1919) 157-60.

eastern cult of the Cabiri²²): (1) Grouping in triads. (2) Deities of both sexes grouped together in the same cult. (3) Small stature. (4) Eggs as symbols. (5) Syncretism with the Roman *penates*. In the monuments from the Continent, which may be taken together, we find: (1) In stature, variation between giants and dwarfs (5f, 17). (2) Male deities, with or without beards (7-12, 14-16, 19-28f). (3) Phallic worship (14-16, 19-28). (4) A connection with navigation (17; perhaps also on a sepulchral monument from Aquincum, mentioned by Kerényi,²³ on which a god or more likely an Harpocrates wearing the *cucullus* appears together with Triton and a river-god). (5) Finally, perhaps a *Hieros Logos* in book form (5, 7-12, 28f). All these details are remarkably reminiscent of the cult and representation of the Cabiri.

In view of all these points of resemblance, I hope that it will not be considered unduly rash to suggest that among the Celts of the Danube region, Gaul, and Britain, native deities who wore the *cucullus* were assimilated not only to the Roman *genius* and the eastern Telesphorus—their phallic and protective character, and the similarity of their representation and dress to that of Telesphorus made that a natural way for Greeks and Romans to interpret these deities—but also to the Cabiri, the centres of whose cult were at no great distance from the Danube, and who were often brought by syncretism into connection with barbaric native deities. The *pilos* or cap of the Cabiri may have supplied the bridge to the representation of the hooded *genii cucullati* of the Celts; and the process may have been assisted by further resemblances, whether

²² Cf. the bibliography in Roscher, *Myth. Lex. s.v. Megaloi Theoi, Penates*; Daremberg-Saglio, s.v. *Cabiri*; RE s.v. *Kabeiros, Mysterien, Thebai*; Wilamowitz-Moellendorff *cit.* I 85, II 176; Robert-Preller *cit.* 847 f., 890; O. Gruppe *cit.* 1784, 1867; Kern, *Die Religion der Griechen I* (1926), pp. 28, 38, 40, 54, 124, 129-30, 133-4, 138 f., 141 f., 149, 152, 155, 158, 165, 214, 217 f., 235 f., 296.

²³ *Loc. cit.*, p. 11; Kuszinszky Bálint, *Aquincum, az ásatások es muzeum ismertetése* (1933), p. 66 no. H *456; V. Kuszinszky, *Aquincum* (1934).

fortuitous or due to a common origin, in characteristics and perhaps in myths as well. It is possible, therefore, that our *genii cucullati*, like other romanized Celtic cults,²⁴ may have been influenced by Hellenistic mystery religions from the east, the predecessors and at the same time the powerful rivals of rising Christianity.²⁵ A survival of the *genii cucullati* in the similar representations of dwarfs, hobgoblins, and the like, in the post-Roman period is considered probable by both Egger and Kerényi: the point is one on which certainty can hardly be attained, but such a transformation does not seem unlikely, and the possibility of it serves to increase the interest of this curious cult.²⁶

²⁴ Cf. RE s.v. *Matres, Mercurius, Muttergottheiten*.

²⁵ Cf. A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (1933) 122 f.

²⁶ Cf. Egger *cit.*; Kerényi *cit.*; Mautner-Geramb *cit.* 159 f.; *Handwörterbuch des Deutschen Aberglaubens* s.v. *Berggeister, Erdleute, Gütel, Hausgeist, Heugütel, Hut, Kapuziner, Klabaftermann, Kobold*.