

Timeline of Irish Art

An tSEODLANN

Éire san Iarnaois agus sa Luathré Chríostaí Celtic and Early Christian Ireland

The TREASURY

Iron Age Art 300 BC—AD 400

Decoration on Iron Age objects is characterised by curvilinear motifs in the so-called La Tène style, an art style known throughout Iron Age Europe. The style is characterised by its curvilinear nature. Vegetal designs, such as stylized palm trees, lotus blossoms, vines and tendrils are seen, as well as human masks, stylized animals and bird heads. Non-representational motifs include trumpet- and lyre-shapes, spirals and S-shaped scrolls. Various techniques include casting, hammering and engraving. Red enamel is used in stud settings or in fields to highlight reserved decoration.

Early Medieval Art AD 400—AD 1200

During the 5th and 6th centuries Irish metalworkers develop new techniques and decorative styles. Craftsmen continue to use Celtic La Tène motifs and combine these with new types of ornament, to decorate new object forms. External sources of inspiration include the Roman world, Anglo-Saxon England and the Germanic cultures of Europe.

The Golden Age of Irish Art AD 700—AD 850

The Golden Age is defined by unsurpassed skills seen in the manufacture of fine metalwork and illuminated manuscripts, works that show exceptional quality in their ornamentation, especially in the fine detail.

First evidence of La Tène art in Ireland.

Contact with continental Europe. A bronze sword hilt, found in Ballyshannon harbour, Co. Donegal, is probably an import from southern France.

Birth of Christ

Contact with Roman world.

AD 406 Roman legions withdraw from Britain.

AD 431 The missionary Palladius is sent to 'the Irish believing in Christ'. Although Ireland is not conquered by the Romans, Roman influence is traced in artefacts dating from this period. The most enduring influence of all is the introduction of Christianity.

AD 795 First recorded date of Viking raid on Ireland.

AD 800 The Faddan More Psalter is produced, probably in a midlands monastery.

AD 1111 Synod of Rath Breasail Church synods of the 12th century establish diocesan centres in Ireland. This reform leads to competition between monasteries as they seek to be designated as the new diocesan centres. Lavish church metalwork, such as croziers and shrines is produced to strengthen their claims.

<p>300BC</p> <p>Two ribbon torcs near Belfast The presence of gold torcs seems to indicate a continuity of tradition with Bronze Age practices.</p>	<p>200</p> <p>The Toome Scabbard La Tène motifs in the form of stylised foliage shown in repeated spirals and lentoid forms decorate this scabbard plate.</p>	<p>100</p> <p>The Brighter Collar Concentric arcs drawn by compass highlight raised decoration of S-shaped scrolls, trumpet shapes and lentoids.</p>	<p>0</p> <p>The Lambay Collar Found in a grave on Lambay Island. This necklet is of a type known from northern England and lowland Scotland.</p>	<p>100AD</p> <p>The Monasterevin Disc This hammered bronze disc displays peltae and spiral motifs characteristic of La Tène decoration.</p>	<p>200</p> <p>Votive offerings of Roman disc-brooches Newgrange, Co. Meath. These disc-brooches are imports from Roman Britain.</p>	<p>300</p> <p>The Balline Hoard This hoard may be the result of an Irish raid on Roman Britain.</p>	<p>400</p> <p>Ogham stone Monataggart, Co. Cork The development of ogham may be a response to inscriptions on Roman monumental sculpture.</p>	<p>500</p> <p>Enamelled bronze brooch This form of brooch is based on Roman prototypes. Triskeles, spirals and bird-headed motifs, and the use of red enamel, however, show continuity with Irish Iron Age craftsmanship.</p>	<p>600</p> <p>The Ballinderry Brooch Cast decoration, enamel and millefiori decorate this brooch. Its form is derived from Roman traditions.</p>	<p>700</p> <p>The Ardagh Chalice Polychrome studs with inset silver grilles are made to imitate the appearance of continental studs.</p>	<p>800</p> <p>The Derrynaflan Chalice The exclusive use of amber for studs and the coarser nature of the filigree indicate that the Derrynaflan Chalice was made later than the Ardagh Chalice.</p>	<p>900</p> <p>The Ballyspellan Brooch Large quantities of silver come into circulation through new trade routes opened up by Viking traders. Metalwork of the 10th to 12th centuries is decorated using Scandinavian-derived animal art but with a native Irish flavour.</p>	<p>1000</p> <p>The Killamery Brooch Heavy silver brooches are produced in the 9th century. Many of these are gilt and have recesses for applied decoration.</p>	<p>1100AD</p> <p>The Cross of Cong The last of the great Irish medieval Church treasures is made around 1120 to hold a relic of the True Cross. As with the earlier periods, the Cross of Cong shows how Irish craftsmen understand and are influenced by new art styles, and use them to decorate Irish objects.</p>
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