Irish Prehistoric Handicraft. (1)

By A. MAHR, Ph.D., M.R.I.A.

It is hardly possible in the space here available to treat early Irish artistic productions in historical outline in a manner really satisfactory to the author and to the reader. Even though one may, with good reason, maintain that for such a task the period after the Anglo-Norman Invasion (1170) is of ever-decreasing importance, the volume of material is great. Further, it is itself closely connected with the general history of European style at two important points in its development, and hitherto, with the exception of some contributions more particularly concerned with pointing out the problem, no serious attempt has been made to place Ireland against the general European background with reference to the extent of the entire material.

Such an attempt cannot be made here. For such a purpose there is a conspicuous lack of indispensable groundwork, for while, to cite only the more important examples, such vital questions as the transition from La Tène to the Irish National Early Christian style, or the origin and mode of introduction of the Irish expression of zoomorphic ornament, are among many others still completely unanswered, the typology and chronology of the first seven hundred years of our era rest here on a very insecure basis.

The island which lies on the remote side of another island situated on the edge of the European sphere of action, has its own peculiar lines of style development and does not at all fit into the continental (and British) scheme as smoothly as the systematically-minded investigator would wish. In addition, nationalistic secondary considerations have further confused the problem; one may instance the dispute regarding the Irish or Anglo-Saxon character of the Gospels of Lindisfarne.

So, notwithstanding an outwardly voluminous and often very good literature, we still grope in the dark regarding important questions and the problems which are here indicated demand much further work before the continuity of development and the interruption of style succession are correctly recognised. The Early Bronze Age Megalithic religion, for instance, is not really ended either by the fully-developed bronze age or by the introduction of the La Tène culture. On the other hand, the acceptance of Christianity undoubtedly involved a very profound change and the re-entry of Ireland into the occidental world (which in the meantime had experienced the whole Roman period, of whose Irish equivalent we are in absolute ignorance). But this fundamental spiritual change obviously remained for a long time without any noteworthy influence on the material culture, and its expression in the domain of a world-wide missionary activity is but one manifestation of an urge for expansion which had already set in during the immediately preceding pagan period.

It will be necessary to refer to those questions occasionally in the course of this contribution. They are further complicated by the variety of the relationships of Ireland with the early post-Roman Brythonic civilisation in England and Wales as well as with its Anglo-Saxon counterpart and, to no small extent, by the peculiar rôle of Scotland. Whether Scotland was completely inhabited by a race identical with the original Irish population is still a matter of dispute in many points. A similarity in their cultural development lies, however, in the fact that a part of Scotland remained, as did the whole of Ireland, non-Roman. It was, in addition, the scene of a considerable Irish colonisation. The Irish daughter-state, from which the kingdom of Scotland has sprung, assuredly played an important part in the transmission of Germanic influences. The most permanent impressions made by the outer world on Ireland almost all penetrated through South-West Scotland, where the dividing sea is at its narrowest, and even to-day Northern Ireland is a British bridgehead on the smaller island. It was along the smaller islands that the Viking culture also reached Ireland, bringing with it the beginnings of city-founding and stylistic incentives of the first importance. And these Norwegian, and later Danish, Vikings were but the precursors of the later invasion, that of the Normans, who, being indirectly of the same origin, first subdued England and a hundred years later also grasped at Ireland.

(1). This article is a translation of the first part of "Das irische Kunstgewerbe," by Dr. A. Mahr, originally published in "Geschichte des Kunstgewerbes" (Berlin), edited by H. Th. Bessert. For permission to publish the translation we are indebted to the author, and for the work of translating it into English to Mr. C. C. Cremin and Dr. Seán P. O Riordáin.
Plate I.—Bronze pin from Lough Seur, Co. Leitrim; (2) ornamented bronze axe (from a hoard), Scrabo Hill, Co. Down; (3) bone objects from Loughcrew, Co. Meath; (4) stone "battle-axe" from Newtown, Co. Meath; (5) gold lunula (no locality); (6) sword sheaths from Lismaclogher crannog, Co. Antrim.
Thus the first millennium of our era presents a confused picture of complicated influences and movements. The same is true also of the pre-Christian centuries; the apparent homogeneity of the relations of Ireland, at the time when it emerges from the darkness of pre-history into the twilight of the early historical period, should not hide from us the fact that the ethnic structure is very confused. The unifying tendencies of the land formation only incompletely overcame those variations.

The most notable achievements of ancient Ireland in the cultural domain and its most important contributions to the European experience may be grouped around two peak-points, of which the first falls in the Early Bronze Age, and the second in the early Middle Ages. Between these two peak-points, the beginning of the Late Bronze Age and the La Tène invasion represent two peak points of a lesser order. They are characterised by achievements that in forms and ornamentation can well be compared with similar and contemporary products of other countries. Nevertheless, these two periods have only got a local significance; both events are but the Irish expression of far-reaching movements whose centre lay elsewhere. These movements also included Ireland, but the island took no active part in the building up and diffusion of those cultures. It is only at a much later period, with the approach of the second peak point, that Ireland, for the first time, suddenly begins to bring the La Tène legacy to such a fine flowering that one is tempted to speak of a La Tène renaissance. An unparalleled spiritual force then goes forth from the little country and permeates all expressions of life with motifs that extended over half Europe. This phenomenon was so strong that it gave the country its decisive bent, which has prevailed till modern times and throughout long gloomy centuries has retained ever-present for the Irish people the consciousness of its achievement.

In this Christian period Ireland had possessed a truly European significance and its contribution to the growth of monastic pen-work and handicraft alone gives it the right to count itself among the great spiritual powers struggling for a new condition of things in early mediaeval Europe. It is therefore fitting that an Irish chapter should be included in any history of the European artistic development in mediaeval and modern times, as the art of the middle ages is unintelligible without some knowledge of the Irish material.

From the foregoing, the upper and lower limits of our subject matter are almost automatically imposed. The upper limit is given by the Anglo-Norman invasion which gives the death-blow to the Romanesque style of Ireland (Hiberno-Romanesque). The decline of this National Irish style had indeed already begun, but the significance of the invasion does not lie in the new and strange influences themselves, for which the invasion prepared the field (feudal organisation closely followed by the penetration of the Gothic style) but in the inevitability of the event. From the time of the invasion onwards the history of Ireland divides into two separate streams, of which one, the indigenous, in all external modes of life and art-form recedes more and more into the background. It becomes a frozen cultural asset until finally the Cromwellian wars broke up the clan system. The new forms not only did not grow on Irish soil but actually remained for the native population essentially foreign. In support of that is the fact that they appear as weak replicas of English and continental art. They were the spiritual possession of a conquering stratum whose power was but half established. Seven battle-filled centuries have proved that Ireland was never completely conquered.

What concerns us here is the fact, that, with the beginning of the 13th century, the National Irish style had exhausted its rôle. Here, therefore, we will only exceptionally deal with monuments of a later period. The lower limit of our discussion lies in the pre-historic period and we may therefore proceed to deal with that matter. Of Neolithic handicraft there is little to report and one can confidently go a further step and say that of the Irish Neolithic in general we know nothing. While today a history of European art without consideration of the stone-age Danube and Rhine land is unthinkable, one is more and more convinced that North-West Europe before the coming of the Megalithic builders (or their culture) had, on the whole, no higher culture. This fact, which was first clearly expressed by T. D. Kendrick and with which, lately, K. H. Jacob-Friesen (for North-West Germany) agrees, does not exclude the possibility that here and there outliers of the higher Neolithic culture reached Britain through the Danube-Rhine corridor and otherwise. Windmill Hill (Wiltshire) for instance, is obviously closely connected with sites such as Urmitz, and, indeed, is but a representative of a still more widely dispersed culture-group. However, all these things
are to be set late and it appears that in Ireland, still more than in Great Britain, an Epimesolithic continued until the commencement of the "monumental period", which is marked by the great Megalithic buildings. Thus, we have already entered the Neolithic.

Architecture is not within the scope of this paper and representations on stone slabs at New Grange, Dowth, Loughcrew, etc., can, on that account, be only briefly touched upon though their symbols are naturally part of the art of their time. Efforts are made to attribute those graves to an advanced stage of the earlier bronze age (the date 1500 B.C. sometimes advanced rather corresponds to their end) but, in my opinion, they must be dated right at the beginning of the Bronze Age. That question is very closely allied to the question of the origin and development of Megalithic monuments in general. This whole problem has recently been re-stated by C. Daryl Forde and the many weaknesses of the view held hitherto have been thereby demonstrated. The Scandinavian system is by no means satisfactory for Northern Europe and completely fails for a region which, like Ireland, lay on the line of expansion of this culture towards Northern Europe and which did not derive its Megalithic culture from the North. The chronological aspect has been dealt with by P. Reinecke in his article in the Schumacher-Festschrift (regarding the dolmenic copper-find from Bygholm in Jutland) where the previously exaggerated dating has been corrected. Apart, however, from questions of absolute chronology there can no longer be any doubt that the simple dolmen is an off-shoot or contemporary manifestation, not the starting point of a development. The chief architectural motif of this development leads from the rock-cut tomb through the beehive and passage graves to developed forms, and has got the closest connections with secular architecture as well as grave houses (as Helmsford, Leubingen, etc.).

It is not only the grave architecture of Ireland, but, also, the forms and decoration of weapons and implements which very quickly achieve, at the beginning of the Bronze Age, a notable excellence. Evidence of this is given by the neck-collars of thin gold, the so-called lunula (pl. I. 5), the halberds, the peculiarly Irish ornamented axes (pl. I. 2) and the gold discs with cres, star and other similar decorations. The ceremonial double axes and some magnificently formed examples of the battle axes are particularly striking (pl. I. 4).

This period of high development which is certainly attributable to the metal resources of Ireland (gold in the Wicklow Mountains, copper in the South and in other districts, especially Wicklow) has always been brought into relation with influences from the Iberian region and even with an Iberian colonisation. There is no good reason for questioning this thesis, even though the proof is not always quite clear. A transference of the chief cultural elements would have been sufficient to set Ireland very speedily on the path of its own independent development.

The fact that Irish Bronze Age pottery, in common with most of the pottery of North-West and Northern Europe, is, in its ornamentation, an off-shoot of beaker pottery, cannot be immediately used to prove Spanish origin. The "Iberian" question in regard to Ireland could, perhaps, be finally answered if distribution maps of all Irish flat axes and halberds of known provenance were available. Find places of such implements undoubtedly tend to concentrate in Southern Ireland, but it should be observed that it is there, too, that the richest copper deposits (with numerous indications of ancient exploitation) occur.

Apart from the grave architecture (with stone basins, etc.) which is, in essence, very closely related to the material of the Pyrenean region, the halberd in particular (which nowhere outside Spain had such a rich development as in Ireland) points to Spain. So also do certain flint arrow and spear-heads, the labyrinth stone from Hollywood, Co. Wicklow (hardly, as has been maintained, from Christian times) and a single pythos grave of the El Arga type from Castle Saffron, Co. Cork. Finally the spiral ornamentation on Irish grave-slabs like the similar representations at Gavrinis, etc., has hardly anything to do with the Nordic Bronze Age as Coffey sought to demonstrate, but is much more probably connected with late Neolithic Malta even though, as yet, the Spanish links are missing. The rôle played by Brittany in the transmission of southern cultural elements still demands illumination in many points. Unfortunately the same is true of even the whole of France and its relations, for example, with the Megalithic culture of England. Ireland and the western portion of Great Britain offer, in this respect, a much clearer picture, in that France, exclusive of Brittany, plays in regard to them a much smaller rôle as a region of transmission.
Plate II.—(1) Horse hair tassel, Cromaghs, Parish of Armoy, Co. Antrim; (2) gold disc, Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan; (3) sepulchral vessels: (a) from Deerpark, Co. Kilkenny; (b) Knocknecoura, Co. Carlow; (c) Tallaght, near Dublin. All three came from cist graves with cremation burials; (4) stone from Mullaghmast, Co. Kildare; (5) Turroe stone, Co. Galway.
In the earliest stages of the Bronze Age during which all the cultural elements were referred to blended into a unity, Ireland far outshines, not only the neighbouring island (whose Bronze Age, which begins later even though shortly after the invasion of the Beaker People, is of other origin) but also large portions of the continent. The "lunulae" have already been cited and a glance at the frequently-reproduced map of their distribution suffices to prove this assertion. Besides the relations to the northwest continent, that which interests us more particularly is the strong Irish influences on North Central and North Europe, principally represented by the typical Irish metal axes. Montelius has already traced the distribution of such types in the North. Bremer has pointed to grave slabs from Hesse, whose rather flat wolf-tooth design recurs in New Grange and, as he has been able to show, is obviously of the same type as the representations on the well-known megalithic idols from Portugal. This Irish influence reaches its limit everywhere on the continent at that point where the contemporaneous Aunjetitz and related cultures make themselves felt. This hypothesis explains also how the British Early Bronze Age came completely under Irish influence; the continental influences of the Beaker People lapsed before the Aunjetitz and kindred influences became completely active.

Bremer especially has pointed to the counter influences of the northern Bronze Age by which Ireland was enriched and has correctly emphasised that they became stronger after the advanced Period II of the Bronze Age. Contrary to Bremer's opinion, I would ascribe to those counter-influences the large ribbed gold neck collars (pl. III) which, in material and workmanship, are certainly Irish, but did not originate in the lunulae. They are naturally derived, as in the North, from the combination of single neck-rings and this latter type occurs in Ireland much later and particularly seldom. The characteristic neck-ornament of the advanced Bronze Age in Ireland is the twisted neck-ring generally made from very sharp gold strips and sometimes so large that one is led to think of them as girdles. The round gold terminal discs of the previously mentioned ribbed gold neck-collars have been found exceptionally on the European continent (e.g. Liebfrauenkirche at Worms).

Even if it is established that, with the end of Period II, Ireland's influence on other cultures is practically at an end, that does not, however, denote a falling off in creative power or in any way a period of decline as has lately been maintained. The fact is simply that Ireland's rapid initial advance beyond the other countries as a home of an earlier and higher metal culture was overtaken and thereby she lost the possibility of cultural pre-eminence. The excellent rapiers, the development of the socketed spearhead (whose early appearance in Northern Europe possibly gives another instance of British-Irish influence, if the type did really originate in these islands), the grave pottery, often of a high artistic order (pl. II. 3; a, b, c) all go to disprove a decline. Only at the end of the Middle Bronze Age can there be any question of such.

The Middle Bronze Age is characterised by insularity and not by a pause in development much less by retrogression. Ireland shares this insularity with Great Britain and, on that account, the culture of both countries experienced a larger common loss than was the case in the previous period. When we remember that the Early Bronze Age of southern and eastern Great Britain is obviously of different origin from that of Ireland and of the western coast of Britain, that between the two cultures there is remarkably little interchange and that all the splendour is on the side of Ireland, we see that the unification process which came about resulted in a decline in Ireland's singular position. The British contribution comes more strongly into play. But this contribution is in many important respects not a development of the types which came into England with the Beaker People but rather a resurgence or strengthening of native traditions to which in Ireland there are fundamentally related parallels. This essentially means that the western cultural group which had its origin in the Megalithic civilisation proved stronger than the eastern group which arrived from the Rhine. This conclusion becomes particularly evident from the pottery, which is important because of the now widespread cremation rite. The cinerary urn and the very common food-vessel did not originate in the pottery of the Beaker Folk of Great Britain. The main types of axes, swords, etc., prove the connection with the general west European development, whose eastern border on the continent is defined by the limit of the Bronze Age tumulus culture. New types arrived in the islands through those portions of Great Britain lying nearest the Continent.
The achievement of this community of culture provides, in my opinion, the decisive feature which distinguishes the Middle Bronze Age of Great Britain and Ireland; it came about at the expense of the singular position of Ireland, whose splendour naturally became a little dimmed. In the process, however, Irish and especially west British culture played the leading rôle. The best proof of that is afforded already at the beginning of the period by Stonehenge, the architectural high light of Megalithic influence in the eastern group.

The significance of the movements, caused by the Urn-field peoples, is extraordinarily great and, on the continent, truly epoch-making for the re-arrangement of Europe. At the transition from the second to the first millennium, B.C. In Great Britain and Ireland we see at that period (Montelius V) a radical breach in the traditional forms of objects of utility and art, their place being taken by types, the immediately preceding stages of which are here lacking. These new forms penetrate through Cumberland and Wigtownshire to Northern Ireland and spread themselves from there over the rest of the island. We will next treat those forms which we know to occur in Northern and in Eastern-Middle Europe earlier than in the British Isles. Among those are, in particular, the socketed axe, the axe-type of the later Bronze Age of Great Britain and Ireland; in addition the whole rich development of the leaf-shape sword and the accompanying forms, sunflower-pins (pl. I. 1) (whose form is only explicable on the analogy of East German and Sudetes pins). A pin of this type, together with a razor or derived terramara type (encased in a leather sheath), a socketed axe, a socketed chisel and a highly remarkable piece of horse-hair cloth (pl. II. 1) was found in a bog at Cromaghs, County Antrim. The small hoard was rolled up in a woolen garment and the horse-hair cloth shows an artistic finish which it would be hard to surpass. It may be here observed that carefully-worked containers and even shallow timber cases for lunulae are also known from the Early Bronze Age. The remnants preserved are, however, too mutilated to permit of satisfactory reproduction.

One would fail to do justice to the handicrafts of this period if one did not at least mention the bronze trumpets which for Ireland are so particularly distinctive. They are often referred to in literature and it would seem that they originated in this period. This may be conjectured from the largest find, that of Dowris, Offaly. Bremer has correctly pointed out that the type seems to make its appearance in a fully developed form. He favours influence from Northern Europe (but he expresses himself in a peculiarly contradictory manner). The characteristic bent Northern trumpet is, however, missing in Ireland and in the Period Montelius III (North) it is not yet possible to trace the forerunners of the developed Irish trumpets; on the other hand, there are in Ireland finds of (Alphornartigen) blowing-instruments which must be very old. In a word, although from the whole context it would appear probable, the question is still an open one whether Northern Europe did really provide the initiative for the development of the Irish trumpet which then became independent. For the relationship of these two North European groups to the Continental Celtic and Spanish ones we must refer the reader to the special literature on the subject. Finally close connections between Ireland and Northern Europe are proved by certain gold discs, e.g., by that from Latton, County Cavan (pl. II. 2) regarding which one is immediately reminded of the older gilt disc from Trundholm. The Irish one can be dated in Period Montelius V (British) on the evidence of the two gold ornaments with expanded ends. The disc from Latton represents in its decoration technique a middle stage between the Trundholm and the pure gold one from Moordorf, near Aurich. The radial interruption of the design on the Irish disc is, however, absent on the Continent.

In the period with which we are here concerned the simple types of the prevailing weapons and implements are those that immediately precede the Hallstatt forms, in the chief centres of European pre-history. The Late Bronze Age lasts longer in the north than in the British Isles and it was only discovered in recent years that there was also in England such a thing as a Hallstatt stratum. This culture comes late and has a rather sporadic character. The mere fact, however, that it was able to penetrate at all favours the conclusion that the British Late Bronze Age lasted over-long. Hallstatt influences only came to Ireland indirectly. They make themselves particularly evident in weapons (bronze Hallstatt swords, certainly native productions after imported models) and in bronze vessels (particularly situla type which recall Hallstatt forms) and, in general, in objects suitable for trade. In its main outline the culture remains the same, and the absence of the large number of new types, which one would have
Plate III.—GOLD COLLAR FROM GLENINSHEEN, CO. CLARE.

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expected in a comprehensive cultural transformation, only supports the conclusion, that the Late Bronze Age culture, poor in inventions and untouched by innovations, lasted until the La Tene invasion put an end to it. As the La Tène civilisation when it first arrived in Ireland, was already in an advanced stage, Montelius’ fifth period has comparatively an amazingly long duration—at the very least five hundred years. A more exact sub-division has not yet been attempted and the uniformity of the finds is not very encouraging for such an undertaking. A similar problem exists, indeed, for many portions of Western France, but the period in question is far shorter.

The La Tène culture of Ireland is not at all the youthfully fresh style which we know from the Rhineland. It comes like the preceding Bronze Age from the north-western part of Great Britain and strikes its deepest root in north-east Ulster. It had thus travelled a long way before it touched Ireland and that fact is, in spite of its stormy development, not without significance. The total number of finds is very small (to the south of a line from Dublin to Galway they are completely lacking) and it has often been correctly remarked that it represents the culture of a conquering ruling class. On the other hand, the distribution of finds and other considerations place the oft-repeated assertion, that La Tène culture came direct to Ireland from the Continent, in the realm of fable. The culture which in Britain corresponds exactly to the earliest La Tène finds in Ireland is best represented by the famous South-English crannog of Glastonbury, Somerset, which belongs to a well-advanced La Tène stage and shows the closest stylistic dependence on the La Tène culture of Brittany. Prior to the Glastonbury period there had spread over large parts of England an older La Tène culture which is much more closely related to the Marne culture and is altogether lacking in Ireland. The Glastonbury culture is therefore to be placed quite late. Its significance lies in the fact that British La Tène proper (Late Celtic) derives from it. Its significance is not merely local but world-wide, as it formed the germ of the early-Christian-Irish style.

Already in the west-Celtic continental expressions of this branch of the La Tène culture, for instance on the vases of Saint-Pol-de-Leon and Plouheuc (Finistere), we observe the exuberantly rich, playful, yet sure emblem of the ornamental elements of the La Tène style. This later reaches its zenith in a kind of “famboyant style” (e.g. in the famous Aesica fibula in the museum in Newcastle-on-Tyne, about 120 A.D.), of which traces may be recognised in the British provincial culture of a later period. The metal work which belongs to the Glastonbury style, or is at least in close connection with it, extended over large areas, especially in South Britain, and there is at least one Irish site which is absolutely identical, namely, the crannog of Lisnacrogher, Co. Antrim. (Sword-sheaths, pl. I. 6). Unfortunately it was disturbed by seekers for “founds” and while we have from Glastonbury valuable decorated wooden objects of this style there is in Ireland only one find of organic substance, from Loughcrew, Co. Meath, where, in one Bronze Age chambered tomb (Cairn H), there were found about 4,000 flat bone plaques, of which one hundred had a very peculiar decoration in La Tène tradition (pl. I. 3). What their purpose was is unknown but it was hardly a practical one.

The most important gold find of the Irish La Tène period, that from Bignight, Limavady, Co. Derry (pl. IV. 2) is notable, not only in the fineness of the workmanship, but in the fact that the gold boat enriches our knowledge of La Tène forms (the rudder and the mast are missing in the illustration). In spite of the decoration of the torque, which recalls an earlier La Tène stage, the find is probably to be dated at the end of the pre-Christian era as the two gold chains of “Trichinopoly” work indicate. To the same period belongs also the neck-ornament from Lambay Island, near Dublin (pl. IV. 12); it is otherwise a genuine British type (which goes back to forms like the well-known bronze neck-ring from Schlettstadt). The Lambay find is, on that account, particularly important in that (in conjunction with some Roman fibulae, etc.) it points to rather strong penetration of Irish soil by British types of the immediately pre-Claudian period up to 43 A.D. and of the earlier Empire period in general. The La Tène Irish fibulae (pl. IV. 11); the bronze boar figures (pl. IV. 10); and the spoon-like (pl. IV. 9) objects which are generally found in pairs and whose purpose is still enigmatical: call for no particular notice as they have parallels, not only in Great Britain, but to some extent also on the Continent. The same applies to the phallic so-called “Omphalos stones” (pl. II. 5) whose resemblance to the stone from Kamaria, Finistere, is sufficiently well-known (Bernard le Pontois has recently incorrectly attributed the latter to the Bronze Age) and which clearly show the survival of the Megalithic tradition in its out-of-the-way retreats.
A few small bronze fragments (pl. IV. 13), which have rightly been compared to the best east Asiatic bronzes well represent, not from the point of view of magnificence of material or luxurious treatment, but in their technical finish and noble taste, the zenith of Irish craftsmanship of the La Tène period. The find place is unknown and it is also disputed whether they are the points of a crown, the horns of a helmet, or the fragments of some other ornamental object. The fillings of the volute centres and the other middle points of the decoration (bird's eyes, etc.) were probably enamel, although one would incline to think of coral. Enamel was, of course, known in the Irish La Tène, but was apparently less frequent than in the British culture. The best pieces have been noted by Ball and Stokes. Enamel became quite common later and it might be that, in dating transitional forms, more objects should be attributed to the early period than has been hitherto assumed.

Another specially Irish type, whose purpose is doubtful, is represented by the large saucer-shaped bronze plates (like early Iron Age Guide B.M., fig. 193) with La Tène ornament in relief, which recurs in exactly similar form on the terminal plate of the famous Irish trumpet from Lough-na-Shape, Co. Armagh (pl. IV. 1). It is noteworthy that there is, hitherto, not one single pottery sherd that can be attributed with any probability to Irish La Tène culture. That fact may be partially explained by the preponderant use of wooden vessels, but, in my opinion, it also bears testimony to the numerical weakness of the conquerors among whom, perhaps, the female element was proportionately smaller still.

That the total number of finds is strikingly small has already been mentioned. The problem, however, becomes still more enigmatic when we state that for the immediately succeeding stage—i.e. for what corresponds to the Roman Provincial culture of Britain, the finds are, if anything, still fewer. We know, indeed, that Ireland in this period must have been thickly populated. As early as the third century the Irish showed themselves as very unpleasant neighbours to the Province. Their influence on British affairs steadily increases with the decline of the Empire, and before the end of the fifth century the Dalriada Scots founded in Kintyre the Irish daughter-state that became the nucleus of the historic kingdom of Scotland. The great expansion was already in full swing and must, as is proved by the datable finds of a later period, have brought about a complete identity of culture between North Britain and Ireland (there is in the Roman period a profound difference in that the tower-shaped Scottish brock does not appear in Ireland). At the same time, apart from a few well-dated outstanding objects and ogham stones, we do not know the archaeological content of this very active period. This and the preceding La Tène period together cover 6 or 7 centuries and all the movable objects from Ireland that belong to the two periods would fill, at the most, two or three museum cases of average size. No one has so far given an even partially satisfactory explanation of this problem. It is clear that the crannóg culture of Ireland (and Scotland) has its roots in this period and many of its types attest provincial Roman influence. Such similarities in forms, however, may be explained by common antecedents in the latest La Tène period, and as practically no Irish crannóg has been systematically excavated, little is to be got from the material. It is, therefore, not possible to distinguish early from late (prior to c. 400 A.D.) and it is to be hoped that a crannóg which will render possible the chronological subdivision of the finds, will soon come to scientific notice.* Until then we must content ourselves with the few objects that, stylistically, belong, on the one hand, neither to the pure La Tène, nor on the other, to the La Tène renaissance of the early Middle Ages. In addition, there are a few others which unmistakably imitate provincial Roman forms.

Let us begin with these. To that group belongs especially the famous fibula from Ardakillen near Strokestown, Co. Roscommon (pl. IV. 4), which is dated by the similar fibula from Aessiea (see above). Less well-known is another fibula, now in the British Museum (pl. IV. 5). It is obviously modelled on late Roman fibulae (scheibenförmig). Both are artistically of a high standard and the same applies to other kindred examples, for which the reader is referred to the literature.

*Since this paper was written Crannóga have been scientifically examined at Ballinderry, Offaly, and at Lagore, Co. Meath. (Editors' Note).
Plate IV.—(1) Bronze trumpet from Lough-na-Shade, Co. Armagh; terminal disc to larger scale; (2) gold find from Brolighter, Co. Derry; (3) bronze object—use unknown; (4) bronze brooch, Ardakillin, Co. Roscommon; (5) bronze brooch, gilt with gold and with glass insets; (6) bronze pin; (7) silver pin; (8) bronze pin; (9) pair of spoon-shaped bronze objects; (10) bronze boar; (11) fibula; (12) neckring, Lambay Island, Co. Dublin; (13) ornamental objects.
Of the former style of object a very important type is the hand-pin (pl. IV. 6, 8) in Ireland and Scotland (rare in England) whose chronological position cannot be established by Roman parallels, but only on stylistic grounds. This object is usually filled with enamel, and the absence of all interlaced ornament furnishes a good terminus ante quem. How far back they go is still uncertain, but millifiori technique (which consists of composite little discs that are cut from a bundle of different coloured glass rods) proves that for the fully-developed type we should not go back further than the advanced Empire period. R. A. Smith has made a thorough investigation of hand-pins and inclines to derive them from the swan-necked pins. About 200 A.D. the head begins to take on the characteristic form and the specimens illustrated here should be ascribed to the 7th-12th century.

Other pin-types only begin late according to him. A specifically Irish decorative form is shown in figure 3 of plate IV. What purpose these dress objects served is still unknown; an effort has been made to derive them from the spectacle fibula. In the case of horse-bits, which exhibit scant but very tasteful decoration, the connection with the known types of the preceding period is evident, and this is true also of the ornamented stone from Mullaghmast, Co. Kildare (pl. II. 4) in which the Megalithic tradition is still to be noted. Scotland has a complete class of peculiar representations in stone which are dated to the same period and, to some extent, even later. The Mullaghmast stone could equally well, from the style of its decoration, belong to a later period, but it would, nevertheless, be difficult to assume that such a menhir could be erected in Christian times.

On the whole, one may conclude that there is not an absolute lack of related finds to show the connection with the later period. They are, however, to a large extent, without a background and the everyday utility forms which would bridge the hiatus and which would probably exist among the mass of finds from raths and crannogs are lacking. At the end of this period Ireland became Christian.