Irish Early Christian Handcraft.

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When, after thirty years of missionary activity in the declining period of the Empire, St. Patrick died in 463, paganism was by no means exterminated. But the foundation stone had been laid on which, after a short preparatory period, a great edifice was erected—the work of the Irish Missions in the northern lands, a work which drew half Europe into its orbit and left a proud heritage of ambassadors of Faith and Knowledge, familiar to us all, such as Columbanus, Gallus, Dicuil, Fursa, Fiacrius, Fridolus, Erigena, Sedulius, Erard, Pirmin, Kilian, Coloman, Virgilius, Witten, Livin and Wiro, to each of whom the epitaph of the famous ecclesiastic, Cathaldus of Lismore, who died Bishop of Tarentum in 650, might be applied: "Gaude, felix Hibernia de qua proles aima progredivit." To these names, which are, of course, spread over a considerable period, those of the great missionary period are complementary, such as Saints Corbinian, Emmeram, Rudbert, Vitalis, and so on, who may be regarded as the most important products of the Irish mission in Germany. Ireland's second Golden Age had begun!

Among the monuments of this period are three groups in particular which allow us to study art and handicraft: architecture (including the richly decorated High Crosses), illuminated manuscripts, and metalwork. The first two fall outside the limits of our paper. The last, which is so much more important to us as products of other arts (such as woodwork and weaving) are for the greater part lost, expresses itself most clearly in the shape of brooches and church shrines. The brooches, sensitive indicators of fashion changes, are the best representatives of profane art. The shrines are characteristic of the best period of Irish ecclesiastical art. Inscriptions often connect them with historic persons and contemporary events. Conjoined with the intrinsic value of these relics are certain elusive qualities which cannot be expressed in words.

The style which distinguishes all these classes of monuments is a blend, as it were, of various streams, which in the course of development frequently change their course and strength of influence. But the Celtic craftsmen knew how to fuse them into a complete unity, in which the La Tène tradition repeatedly ingeniously adapted itself to new tendencies. From this latter source came spiral ornament, the tendril motif and everything connected with them. Of late classical origin is the older style of interlacing, mainly of single or double strands, as opposed to the three-strand Italian type. Fully developed, it was introduced into Ireland, the Church as well as the Anglo-Saxon movements playing the chief role in its transmission. Places like Durrow and Armagh provided a refuge from the turmoil of the period for this style, as well as for other elements of late classical origin.

From the late 7th century onwards the characteristic interlacing motives supersede pure La Tène derivatives. The transition expresses itself very clearly in the oldest of the wonderful Irish codices, the famous Book of Durrow (in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin), which must date from the second half of the 7th century. To the 8th century belong the priceless manuscripts which reveal the highwater mark of an art enriched by animal ornament. These include the Book of Kells (Trinity College, Dublin) and the Hiberno-Saxon Book of Lindisfarne (British Museum), works which evoke the rapture of all who see their almost inconceivable perfection in all departments of book art.

Of lesser magnitude, and slightly later date, are the Books of St. Chad (recte St. Ceilo) in Lichfield, of Armagh (Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin) and many other Irish manuscripts in St. Gall, and in various other continental monasteries and libraries.

In essence, this book art differs from work in other media only in so far as the material demands it. It is obvious that this monastic art exercised a European influence on account of missionary activities.

That which generally excites the greatest admiration for the "opus hibernicum" is the combination of complication of design and delicacy of execution, though it is not this extrinsic aspect, but rather some emotional quality, which constitutes its innermost essence: it is the vibration and individual existence of the curve, its hastening towards
finality and its preciseness of line, which is a technical presupposition as well as a creative achievement. The acme of interlaced ornament is expressed most clearly in inexhaustible inventiveness, in the principle of non-repetition. The artist created his deepest impulses out of the continuous new experience of an ornamental form fighting for expression and consciously avoided repeating his own design—"copying himself" (Coffey). Irish art, however, would have never become what it is without the addition of zoomorphic designs (animal symbolism is a chapter in itself). The Germanic element bridges the gap to the outer world and places the art of Ireland in the frame of world history, in that period filled by events which ranged from Central Asia to Western Europe.

Let us now trace the rise and decline of this art through some of its best representatives. It must, of course, be understood that the theoretically-established stylistic chronology does not necessarily date each individual object, as for example, some of the brooches, with absolute certainty.

The chief brooch type in Early Christian Ireland is ring- or horse-shoe-shaped, and called "penannular brooch." It had a long history behind it before it reached the advanced stage which we shall now discuss.

As Coffey suspected, the La Tène ring-brooch can actually be traced to late Hallstatt bow-fibula, such as those we know well from Spain (Despeñaperros, Aguilar de Anguita, etc.). The fully developed penannular brooch is represented everywhere in the La Tène culture. It forms a special group side by side with the more general bow-fibula, and through the provincial cultures acquires still wider distribution. The modern Algerian ring-brooches are to be derived from it, as well as the widely spread East European horseshoe fibulae which outlived the Irish penannular brooches very considerably.

The specifically Irish form of the Early Christian penannular brooch cannot, in principle, be distinguished in its evolution from the ring pin. The brooch is represented, fully developed, on the High Crosses as an article of costume, and it seems that the ringheaded pins followed a similar collateral course from the very beginning, and in some cases were adapted as brooches. (Pl. 7. No. 8, 9).

According to Reginald Smith, the Irish penannular brooch begins its characteristic development in the second half of the fifth century, its immediate starting-point being the types influenced by provincial Roman modes, good instances of which come, for example, from Wales. The material is bronze, the length of the pin is about that of the diameter of the ring. Spirals and other La Tène derivatives are the usual decorative motives of the ends of the unclosed ring. These gradually become wider, and very soon develop into proper plates, almost triangular in shape. In the 6th and 7th centuries the brooch becomes larger and heavier, and the length of the pin increases to twice the diameter of the ring. Later on, interlacing is introduced and we come to the period so distinguished by the Book of Durrow.

The peak point of development is reached in the 8th and 9th centuries (about 150 years). The brooches now become exceptionally large and heavy, and bear the richest ornament. As a consequence of their weight, the plates had to be connected by small strips, and for a time they even closed together forming a semi-circular plate. As a result of this the pin had to be made removable by a special piece of mechanism. The head of the pin usually has the shape of the key-stone of an arch. The ring becomes flat, and the decoration on it is often concentrated in a sharply distinguished area which lies directly opposite the opening in the ring.

This is the period of the best manuscripts (Kells, Lindisfarne), to which the abundance of decorative motives (intertwined in a most complicated manner, fantastic animals, spiral, ring-chain and trumpet patterns) and decorative techniques (enamel, amber and glass inlay, gold filigree) bear witness. The illustrations show a few representative specimens. Pl. 7: 2; Pl. 8: 1 is the famous Tara brooch (found, not at Tara, but near Betaghstown, Co. Meath). It is of bronze, with gold filigree, niello, enamel, amber and red and blue glass; it is dated to shortly before 750. It is necessary to see the original (and even then under a magnifying glass) in order to appraise at its worth the delicacy of its execution: it reaches such a pitch that even the thin wires are beaded, and that two glass beads are inserted into the interlaced chain.
To this period belong also the famous brooch from Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, and the famous silver brooch from Hunterston (Ayrshire, Scotland), which bears a Runic inscription. They are probably coeval, but both may be slightly later than the general period. To the end of the 8th century has been dated the golden Dalriada Brooch from the neighbourhood of Coleraine, Co. Antrim, and that from Kilmainham, Co. Dublin (Pl. 7:3). But the Dalriada Brooch is probably somewhat later.

The well-known "Queen's Brooch" from Co. Cavan (so called after Queen Victoria, to whom a cast was given) (Pl. 7:4), an unpublished example from Ballynaglogh, Co. Antrim (a new acquisition, Pl. 8:2), which is very strongly Scottish in style and, further, one from the Crannóg at Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath (Pl. 7:5), may all be dated about 800. In the early 9th century a certain decline becomes noticeable, in spite of the great brooch from Ardagh (Pl. 8:3), which must later be treated of. The larger silver brooch from Killamery (Pl. 7:6) and two very similar, though smaller brooches in the Ardagh hoard give testimony of this retrogression. The trumpet and spiral patterns gradually disappear, the zoomorphic motives recede into the background, and interlacing becomes finally free from all extraneous designs. How this development takes place can be clearly seen about 850. A good example is the brooch from Ballyspellan, Co. Kilkenny (Pl. 7:7), which, by the way, has an Ogham inscription on the back. The material is now mainly silver; gilding falls into disuse, and the interlacing resembles very much that of the Scandinavian tortoise fibulae of the early 10th century. On account of the smaller weight of the brooches, the junction of the end plates is absent.

With this, the development ends about 950. It might appear as if Scandinavian forms, such as the tortoise fibulae, were now more preponderant, though the number is so small that one might rather see in it a heritage of the Vikings themselves. Indeed, an attempt has been made to derive one particular type of ring-brooch, that with thistle-shaped end knobs (whose best representatives come from Cumberland), from the Baltic Viking areas. The type is called the "Thistle Brooch," though, of course, it has nothing to do with the similarly-named provincial Roman type. It is dated to about 900-950. One such brooch occurred in the Ardagh hoard, it being its latest object. The above-mentioned forms of Ireland's Viking Period are dated, not only by a well-studied Scandinavian evolution, but also by a large series of well-defined English hoards, the best known of which comes from Cuerdale, Lancashire. About 200 years, or so, divide the end of this evolutionary series from the time when the Anglo-Normans set foot on Irish soil; but, apart from certain brooch-types of Scandinavian derivation, it is not known what pins the Irish may have used as dress-fasteners. It is possible to think that the brooch had fallen into disuse. A wooden Gothic statue, however, a very welcome representative of Gothic sculpture, which has lately been acquired by the National Museum, shows that brooches similar to the Scottish "Highland Brooches" must have been worn in Ireland, as the statue itself can scarcely be Scottish. Perhaps the ring-headed pins were more preferred and one is tempted to place examples such as that on Pl. 7:8 in this period. The exceptional length of the pins reminds us of stipulations in the Brehon Laws (the codified legal system) against the use of too-long pins: because in the ambition to outdo one's neighbour, the bearers of such pins endangered other people. A different development of this type is shown in Pl. 7:9. It is silver with gold inlay of zoomorphic motives; the plate ends in a ring which is held in place by an animal head. The style of the pin here illustrated, however, suggests an earlier date. But this is no objection to placing the flourishing period of this type in the 10th century. The Clonmacnoise brooch, a very fine example, for many years in private possession, but now seemingly lost, belongs to the same class.

On the other hand, examples like that on Pl. 7:10 must be placed a little earlier. The form is reminiscent of older continental types and certainly looks foreign. For long it had been labelled as a find from the Viking cemetery of Norwegian Dublin (Kilmainham-Islandbridge), but this description has been shown to be false, which proves our foregoing comment. Pl. 7:1 shows a peculiar brooch, which does really come from this site. It is the gilded bronze fragment of a book-cover or similar object, which had been roughly converted into a brooch. That this was a Viking characteristic is proved by a large number of similar Irish fragments from the graves of women in Norway itself.

The Ardagh hoard serves to lead from the brooches to a discussion of the shrines. In the rath at Reerasta, near Ardagh, Co. Limerick, were found together the great chalice, which is one of the most precious possessions of the National Museum (Pl. 8:3,
4, 5; Pl. 9: 1), a simple bronze drinking-cup, a beautiful gilt silver brooch, dated at the very beginning of the 9th century (Plate 8: 6), two somewhat later brooches of the Killamey type (Pl. 7: 6) and a "thistle brooch" of about 950. We are obviously here dealing with a hoard of objects of different dates, which cannot have been hidden before the middle of the 10th century, whether by legal or illegal owners. The chalice, however, is definitely older, and approaches very closely the style, for instance, of the Tara brooch, so that it is nowadays more or less unanimously assigned to the middle of the 8th century, or perhaps one or two decades earlier. On its outer surface are engraved, in a running band, the names of the Twelve Apostles. It is composed of 354 single pieces, of silver, bronze, gilt bronze and gold, which are highly artistically decorated with designs in enamel (champlevé and two types of cloisonné), amber, glass and filigree. In addition to the usual decorative techniques we here find gold granulation, the use of mica and rock-crystal (in the centre of the base), engraving and chaising. This chalice is surely an unique work of art, and with it we approach the study of religious monuments, of which reliquaries and similar shrines are the most important for our purpose.

They are fairly numerous, so that we are forced to deal only with the very best. As the reliquary is a general product of Christian Art, it is not necessary to go into the question here as to whether the sarcophagus with acroterion or the "house idea" (cf. the well-known representation of the sanctuary in the Book of Kells), or simply the chest-shaped casket had given the impulse to the evolution of the series. It must, of course, be admitted that not all shrines were reliquaries: some were used as tabernacles and some as breast shrines (enkolpia).

The Irish shrines, in spite of all vicissitudes of history, have remained the living possession of a devout people. As a rule they are associated with the saint who is reputed to have been the founder or patron of the church to which they belonged. Inscriptions often tell who fashioned them, under whose auspices they were made, and sometimes who at that time possessed lay and ecclesiastical power in Ireland. Gradually it became the custom to hand over to one family the hereditary guardianship of such objects, in return for which it enjoyed special privileges. From such family guardianship many of these relics, as a result of increasing privations during centuries of foreign rule and outlawry of the ancient Faith of Ireland, have come into the possession of the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy (in the National Museum, Dublin). Frequent repairs, alterations and additions, especially in the 14th century, disguise sometimes the original form, though later, Gothic, elements are always recognisable.

A classification can be based on the contents (i.e., on the type of relic or its function), or on the form of the shrine. The two classificatory principles can, of course, be combined. For our purpose, the second basis of classification recommends itself. The following types can be distinguished:

1. The coffin- or chest-shaped shrine ("house-shaped" shrine).
2. The cross-shaped shrine.
3. The arm-shaped shrine.

All these forms are known also in the Continental Church.

The breast shrine is unknown in Ireland, and that indicates a certain looseness in art-historical interrelations, an impression which is strengthened by a study of the next three sub-divisions, which occur only in the territory of the Celtic Church, in Ireland and also in Scotland:

4. The book shrine ("Cumhchad").
5. The bell shrine, and
6. The crozier.

The relics are, respectively, the psalter, the handbell and the pilgrim's staff of the Irish saint. The staff is not the symbolic shepherd's crook so familiar to us on the Continent; it preserves the old, non-symbolic, form of the walking-stick on which an elderly ecclesiastic would lean.

This classification from the outset gives us some fixed chronological points, which analysis of style helps to strengthen.

An important form of decoration consists of fields divided by raised bands, usually bronze, riveted to the wooden backing of the shrine, and often gilt or silver-plated. These panels, which appear in similar formation on the High Crosses, are decorated with gold
or silver filigree-work in the earlier tradition. Bottom- and sometimes side-plates are
decorated by an array of openwork crosses over part of the surface, so that the gilt or
silver-plated pieces stand out against a bronze background or vice versa. Later, and
now decorating all the panels, interlacing ornament and zoomorphic designs are added.
Pictorial representations are generally somewhat later, usually engraved or worked in
relief; similarly, numerous rock-crystals, and so on, are later additions. Leather covers
(satchels) are preserved in three instances, and, from the point of view of handicraft in
non-metallie material, are very important. (Pl. 10: 2).

It is, of course, obvious that this stylistic series should not be taken too literally:
all of the six most important classes of shrines temporarily overlap each other. Class 1,
for instance, lasts, in a way, almost to the end of the native development.

In the surviving series of relics, Class 1 is best represented by the Loch Erne
Shrine (Pl. 9: 2), which is reputed to be the oldest Irish Shrine (8th century). It comes
probably from Devenish Island, Co. Fermanagh. It is made of solid yew wood with
tinned bronze plates; on the sides it has suspension loops. The circular disc contains
amber, set in a framework of interlacing. Various other shrines display more or less
clearly the “hip-roof” type, the best-known example of which comes from Melhus,
Nord-Trondelag, from a ship-burial (Trondhjem Museum). To the same Irish type belong
the shrine in the Cathedral at Chur, that in the Archiepiscopal Museum in Namur (both
8th century), the Copenhagen shrine, that from the Shannon (Edinburgh Museum), the
Monymusk shrine (Aberdeenshire), and several others.

Not less famous is the somewhat later bronze shrine of St. Moedéc; Pl. 10: 1, Pl.
13: 1 give a front and side view of it. It comes from Drumlane, Co. Cavan, and, though
the casket itself is probably 9th century in date, the scheme of decoration by human
figures in high relief belongs to the 11th century. The figures, in all probability, were
originally gilt. In the side view given one can see King David playing with two hands a
harp. On the bottom, amongst other motives, occurs a swastika, executed in blue enamel.
The leather satchel is preserved, and is certainly older than the pictorial representations.

That Class 1 remained a long time in use is shown, for instance, by St. Manchan’s
shrine, the largest Irish representative of this class decorated by human figures. A very
fine publication of it has just been published by Mr. T. D. Kendrick, of the British
Museum, in “Archaeologia,” vol. LXXXV.

The most important relic of the second class is the Cross-reliquary of Cong, Co.
Mayo (Pl. 11: 1, 2), which was made for Turlogh O’Connor, King of Connacht and
Ireland, in 1123, the year of the first Lateran Council. Its purpose was to house a
particle of the True Cross. This invaluable work of art appears originally to have
belonged to Tuam, Co. Galway. It is a yew container, with bronze plates, which are
held together and fastened to the wood by means of silver bands, decorative nails and
nielloed silver discs. On the front, in the separate panels, are golden interlaced zoo-
morphs and settings for enamel and precious stones. In the middle a great piece of
crystal covered the relic. Below the shaft opens out into the socket, into which the pole
of this processional cross could have been inserted. The back, though simpler, is still
very richly and tastefully decorated.

To the third class belongs, first of all, the shrine of St. Lachtn’s Arm (Pl. 9: 3),
which was made shortly before 1127. It comes from Donaghmore, Co. Cork. It
covers the wooden container of a 7th century hand-reliquary. The Shrine itself is
made of bronze with gold and silver inlay, nielloed interlacing, a border of blue stones,
and so on; on the bottom is silver inlay. The decline of interlaced ornament can be
clearly recognised on this example.

We now come to the fourth group, that of the “CumhdachS” or book-shrines, which
experience their most prosperous period in the 11th century. They are rectangular metal
caskets which are in later times superseded by the very plain-looking Bible caskets.
The decorated metal book-mount (Pl. 18: 1) was very little used in Ireland. The leather
satchel is a complementary part of the Cumhdach (Pl. 10: 2).

We propose to discuss very briefly the four best-known Cumhdachs (all in the
National Museum, Dublin). The Shrine for St. Columba’s Psalter, called the Cathach
(Pl. 10: 3, 4. 5) was made about 1084 for a Latin Gospel written about 560, which
is attributed to St. Colum Cille. The artificer was Sitric of Kells, Co. Meath, and the
sponsor Cathbarr O'Domhnaill, chief of the Clan to which St. Columba of Iona belonged. The history of the reliquary is closely bound up with the fortunes of this O'Donnell clan; even later in their Austrian and Spanish homes it served these chiefs of Tir Connaill as ensign and guarantee of certain victory. The bottom is an openwork silver plate laid on a bronze background; the narrow sides have gold-ornamented panels with many 14th century additions. Of the same period is the bronze cover, with its riveted silver plate. The French Brigadier-General, Daniel O'Domhnaill, had a new silver frame made for it in 1723; and in 1802 the shrine was discovered in a Paris Convent and brought back to Ireland.

These vicissitudes are typical of many of these shrines, and it must be admitted that the later additions, practically without exception, seriously detract from the artistic value which was the essence of the original work of art.

The Shrine of St. Maelruain's Missal, called the "Stowe Missal," contained one of the very few old Irish liturgical manuscripts now in existence. The manuscript consists of formulae and prayers of 6th to 8th century date, though the shrine was made in 1023 by Duncaid O'Tagán of Connacnoise at the behest of MacCraith, King of Cashel, and Donnchadh O'Brien, King of Ireland. The latter was a son of Brian Boru, who defeated the Vikings in the decisive Battle of Clontarf in 1014. To this period may be attributed the narrower sides and the bottom (Pl. 12: 1); the cover (Pl. 12: 2) which is decorated in the middle by a large crystal, was made in 1581. The shrine, whose original home was Tallaght, near Dublin, was rediscovered in Ratisbon (Regensburg, in Bavaria).

The Gospel-Shrine of St. Molaise, who died in 563 (Pl. 10: 6; Pl. 14: 1), usually termed "Soisceil Molaise," comes from Devenish Island in Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh, its date lying between 1001 and 1025. It is composed of bronze plates, overlaid by silver ones. The cover is missing. The back has open-work decoration and the front displays an Irish wheel-cross, gold filigree, inlaid carbuncles, and the symbols of the Four Evangelists, whose designations ("Leo," "Aquila," "Homo"), as well as their names themselves are still legible. This shrine, which is remarkably free from later additions, is artistically the finest.

The Shrine of St. Patrick's Gospel (Pl. 13: 2-5), called the "Domnach Airgid," comes from Clones, Co. Monaghan. The manuscript dates from the 8th century and the shrine has various ancient parts; it was, perhaps, originally not designed as a book-covering. The most important piece of the ancient structure is the yew-wood box, the interlacing on whose tinned bronze plates indicates a 7th century date. In 1350 was added a richly-decorated silver-plated box-cover, an idea of which may be had from Pl. 13: 2. Later additions can be passed over.

Pl. 14: 2 illustrates probably the latest representative of the Cumhadachs—the shrine of St. Moling's Gospel (in private possession). It is of bronze with silver plates, and a very large rock-crystal, resting on a background of silver foil, admits of the legibility of the inscription below it. The complete absence of Irish ornament corresponds with the late date of fabrication (1402).

The bronze cross from the Cathedral of Clonye, Co. Cork (Pl. 16: 1), may have belonged to an older Cumhadach or book-cover. It may be dated to shortly before the Anglo-Norman invasion, a feature worthy of note being the representation of the kilt.

The great number of highly artistic objects makes it difficult to arrange a proper selection to illustrate the following classes of shrines, and give an idea of the wealth of the whole group. Therefore, only a few representatives of Group 5 (Bell Shrines) and Group 6 (Staff Shrines or Crosiers) can be discussed.

The Bell Shrine, whose best period approximately corresponds with that of the Cumhadachs, covers the handbell of a saint, which, with his book and staff, formed his most precious legacy. This was a special feature of the Celtic Church. In origin, the bell is nothing more than the rectangular cow-bell made of one piece of sheet-iron, already so well-known in Roman times. A later refinement was dipping in molten bronze, and from the 9th century onwards complete bronze bells occur. In the 11th century the custom of covering these highly-revered relics with shrines began.

None is so famed as the shrine of St. Patrick's bell (Pl. 15: 1,2) and there is no reason to doubt that it is, in fact, the bell which is said in the Annals of Ulster to have been taken from St. Patrick's grave by St. Colum Cille in 552, and to have been sent afterwards to Armagh, the seat of the Primate of Ireland.
The shrine, whose skeleton consists of bronze plates, was made for the episcopal treasury between 1091 and 1105 by Cudulig ua Inmainen (Cú Dui岭gh ua Inmhaíncáin) at the behest of King Domnhall ua Lochlainn (Donnell O'Loughlin or MacLoughlin). The front is decorated by the richest gold filigree set in panels, which form the framework of a cross. The silver-rimmed stones are probably somewhat later. The narrow sides display gilt interlacing, with blue glass in the animals' eyes. Here also are the suspension rings. The peaked upper portion, which covers the bell handle, is of silver with very tasteful interlaced motives and enamel-work, partly cloisonné; while the two peacocks on the back are significant.

Of the many bell-shrines we propose to illustrate only one other fragment of bronze (Pl. 16: 2), with a gilt front, and amber studs. It comes from a private collection in Killua Castle, Co. Westmeath, and, as its decoration (which from the viewpoint of art history is very instructive) shows, it belongs to the 8th century.

The richly-decorated metal coverings of the pilgrim-staffs (crosiers) belong mostly to the 11th century. The shepherd's crook appears only later under foreign influence, and definitely influenced from abroad is also the much earlier T-crozier, which is still preserved in the Near Eastern Church. The crosiers usually have a "comb," whose original zoomorphic character already displays strong tendencies towards decadence. The best known crosiers are the two from Clonmacnoise (the one called the Abbot's Crosier (Pl. 16: 3) being the better preserved); those of Saints Cudulig, Maelfinenn, Mel, Colmán mac Duach, Tola, Mura, Dampnad (Dymnna), that from Inisfallen, Co. Kerry (Pl. 17: 1), one in the Edinburgh Museum, and that from Lismore, Co. Waterford (now in Lismore Castle), which was made in 1110 (Pl. 17: 2-4). Its material is bronze with gilded bands, coloured glass beads, silver filigree (?) and niello. The oaken staff is still preserved in it.

We must pass over shoe-shaped shrines, those of paten form, and so on, though a few objects worthy of note are here illustrated: a bone representation of a cock (Pl. 17: 5), mounted on a bronze rod, its hind-parts being also of bronze. It probably belonged to a reliquary and was found behind the High Altar of Inisfallen Abbey, Co. Kerry. Other objects include a saddle-pommel of yew (Pl. 16: 4), which was fished out of a lake; it is obviously very old and probably belongs to a cranóg; bones such as those on Pl. 9: 4, on which trial sketches had been made, and which clearly show how deeply the zoomorphic style had taken root in the Crannóg culture.

A passing reference suffices for many thousands of glass beads, which constitute a terra incognita, not, however, of Irish archaeology alone. The heritage of the Viking period, as we have repeatedly seen, does not appear as out of place in the Celtic artistic world as one might, as a matter of course, have expected; and already in the 9th century Irish objects are also frequent in Norway. The Navan find (Pl. 18: 2-8), a charioteer's or horseman's burial, is identically repeated in two instances—at Gausel and Højeby in Rogaland—in Norway. Here the Irish style of the 9th cent. is clearly seen, and Irish objects have been found in 120 Norwegian graves, principally in those regions from which the Vikings, who harassed Ireland, came. We have already had many times to deal with the special stylistic features of Viking objects, in their capacity as artistic intermediaries and as historical sources, although they interest us only indirectly here. The most important site of the period is the cemetery of Norse Dublin a t Kilmainham-Islandbridge. As well as a great amount of genuine Norwegian material found in the graves there, many mixed and pure Irish objects came to light. The constant progress of Scandinavian research will soon, we hope, place us in a position to recognise Germanic influence in Ireland much more easily and to further subdivide the period chronologically. On the other hand, this will also make the bringing to fruition of the Anglo-Saxon and Continental cultures by Irish art more intelligible, and will throw light on the "Dark Ages," as the English like to call the period from 400 to about 800. It is a problem of European importance, which still demands a great amount of work. One difficult question, for instance, is how to account for the astonishing fact that, according to our present knowledge, the high-water mark of Irish metal-work must be placed considerably earlier (by about two centuries) than the best architectural products?

We have mainly busied ourselves here with the smaller objects of art, so that the monumental greatness of the best period of Irish art has little space for itself. Let us, however, glance at one of the finest architectural monuments belonging to the Ireland of the Viking period. It is the High Cross of Muiredach at Monasterboice, Co. Louth
(Pl. 16: 5), which proves that, in spite of the unrest of the time, art was still fostered. It was erected in 924, the richly-decorated High Cross at Clonmacnoise on the Shannon being more or less coeval with it. Two other famous High Crosses are also illustrated: the West Cross at Monasterboice (Pl. 16: 6) and the High Cross of Moone Abbey, Co. Kildare (Pl. 9: 5).

These famous places of pre-Invasion Ireland, partly monasteries, partly universities, seats partly of ecclesiastical, and with it also of temporal power, and, correspondingly, the economic centres of productive activity, cannot be omitted from the old Irish scene, and their remains supplement in stone what we recognised in a study of the smaller objects of art.

The panels of the Muiredach Cross display various scenes, including the devil’s disturbing St. Michael in his weighing of souls by throwing stones into the scales, the hand of God, carrying the earthly orb (which later became the arms of the province of Ulster) and many other pictorial and decorative motives. Perhaps the finest of all is the figurative representation and symbolical exposition of heavenly joy; a bird sings its song of jubilation into an angel’s ear, who repeats the music on a harp—a charming human note, with which we take our leave of genuine Irish art.

**LIST OF PLATES.**

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All the illustrations in this paper are made from the excellent photographs taken by Mr. J. Ardill, photographer of the National Museum of Ireland, and Mr. T. Mason, Dublin.

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