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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PAGE NO.

INTRODUCTION .....	1
ILLUSTRATIONS .....	4
CHAPTER:	
1. A HISTORY OF THE CELTS AND THEIR MYTHOLOGY	2
2. DESCRIPTION OF MANUSCRIPTS WITH THEIR PURPOSE	19
3. HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF KELLS WITH A STUDY OF THE MANUSCRIPT	26
4. THE CELTIC REVIVAL .....	37
5. CELTIC MOTIFS FOUND IN CONTEMPORARY DESIGN AND THEIR ORIGIN .....	41
CONCLUSION .....	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	60/61
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	62

# ILLUSTRATIONS

NO.		PAGE NO.
	CHAPTER 1	
1.	<u>AN EXAMPLE OF EARLY HALLSTATT</u> .....	4
2.	<u>AN EXAMPLE OF OPENWORK GOLD</u> .....	5
3.	<u>AN EXAMPLE OF OPENWORK GOLD</u> .....	5
4.	<u>CELTIC COINAGE</u> .....	6
5.	<u>MAP OF CELTIC EXPANSION</u> .....	7
6.	<u>EAGLE FROM BOOK OF DURROW</u> .....	8
7.	<u>EXAMPLE OF EARLY CELTIC JEWELLERY</u> .....	9
8.	<u>EVOLUTION OF THE CHI-RHOMONOGRAM HIBERNO-BRITISH MANUSCRIPTS</u> .....	10
9.	<u>FIRST FIGURE FROM BOOK OF KELLS</u> .....	10
10.	<u>DEVELOPMENT OF FIGURES IN BOOK OF KELLS</u> .....	11
	<u>DEVELOPMENT OF FIGURES IN BOOK OF KELLS</u> .....	11
	CHAPTER 2	
1.	<u>THE OPENING WORDS OF ST MARK'S GOSPEL</u> .....	22
	CHAPTER 3	
1.	<u>THE TRUMPET PATTERN</u> .....	30
2.	<u>THE INTERLACEMENT PATTERN</u> .....	31
3.	<u>THE FRET PATTERN</u> .....	32
4.	<u>PLANT FORMS OF DECORATION</u> .....	33
5.	<u>SERPENTINE DECORATION</u> .....	34
6.	<u>SHOES USED IN VARIOUS MANUSCRIPTS</u> .....	36
	CHAPTER 5	
1.	<u>DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE YANG-YIN DESIGN</u> .....	41
1.	<u>EXAMPLES OF MODERN YANG-YIN DESIGNS</u> .....	42
2.	<u>DESIGN FOR GREETING CARD</u> by George Bain .....	43
3.	<u>GREETING CARD DESIGN</u> by George Bain .....	44
3a.	<u>ABERLEMNO STONE AND THE ROSSIE PRIORY STONE</u> ..	45
4.	<u>MODERN VERSION OF ROSSIE PRIORY STONE</u> by George Bain .....	46
5.	<u>DOORWAY DESIGN</u> by George Bain .....	47

NO.

CHAPTER 5 cont'd

PAGE NO.

6.	<u>DESIGN FOR MAGAZINE COVER</u> by George Bain .....	48
7.	<u>DESIGN FOR GREETING CARD</u> by George Bain .....	50
9.	<u>DESIGN FOR POEM</u> by Douglas Yound "For Willie Souter", by George Bain .....	52
10.	<u>MAN PLAYING HARP</u> by George Bain .....	54
11.	<u>DESIGN FOR NEW YEAR GREETING CARD</u> by George Bain	54
12.	<u>SYMBOLS OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS</u> by George Bain .	55
13.	<u>CONTEMPORARY VERSION OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS</u> by David Lance Goines .....	56
14.	<u>CARD "GREETINGS FROM IRELAND"</u> by Criterion Press Export .....	57
15.	<u>DEIRMUID AND GRAINNE</u> by Jim Fitzpatrick .....	58

## INTRODUCTION:

A quotation from Lady Wilde ("Ancient legends mystic charms and superstitions of Ireland" 1888) "Early Irish Art illustrates in a very remarkable manner those distinctive qualities of Irish nature, which we know from the legendary traditions have characterized our people from the earliest times.... All the reverential, artistic, fanciful and subtle evidences of the peculiar Celtic Spirit find a full and significant expression in the wonderful splendours of Irish early art".

Ancient Celtic culture has produced one of the oldest and richest sources of design, whose roots lie deep in the pagan past. The quotation above gives a good description of this. This thesis is on ancient Celtic art and design, generally, although it concentrates on particular aspects. In it, the history of the Celts, their mythology and legends, origins of their primitive art have been researched.

In looking at the main Celtic manuscripts, more emphasis has been put on the world wide known, Book of Kells, because it is from this stem the beginning of illumination and writing which is such a strong characteristic of Celtic art. Within this section, the origin of this beautiful manuscript has been described. The colouring within this book, and others is described and the reason behind this, also the media used then, to illustrate the manuscripts.

This leads to researching the possible causes for the development of Celtic art and design, here one aspect seems to have led to another.

The final chapter deals with the origin of Celtic motifs found in contemporary design, which include George Bain's contemporary designs and includes designs by less well known artists.

Before coming at the end of the 19th century the site was a small village, which was the only one of its kind in the area. It was a small village, which was the only one of its kind in the area.

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Fig. 1. This is an example of early village life, from the village, which was the only one of its kind in the area. It was a small village, which was the only one of its kind in the area.

## CHAPTER 1

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Fig. 2. This is an example of early village life, from the village, which was the only one of its kind in the area. It was a small village, which was the only one of its kind in the area.

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Fig. 3. This is an example of early village life, from the village, which was the only one of its kind in the area. It was a small village, which was the only one of its kind in the area.

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Before looking at the Celts in Britain and Ireland the historical-artistic background of the European Celts known as La Tene will be considered.

The last and most brilliant phase, artistically (and militarily) of celtic pre-history was the phase represented by the La Tene culture, which began about 500 B.C. The name of the culture which shows us the material culture of the middle and late Iron age derives from that of a village near Neuchatel in Switzerland, where a very informative site was excavated early in this century. The cultural label does not claim this La Tene site as the origin of the culture merely as an example of it

Three main sources for La Tene or European Celtic art have been shown,

(Jacobsthal "Early Celtic Art " ) (1)

The first of these is Hallstatt Geometric Abstraction "Hallstatt", is a label used to designate the first iron-economy culture north of the Alps. This culture survived from the seventh - eighth century B.C. In other words, Hallstatt was the cultural predecessor of La Tene ( of which the Hiberno-British Celts were a Branch )

Fig. 1. This is an example of early Hallstatt from Sternberg, Couth Germany. This impressed dish shows early versions of the squares, circles, and interlocking dots (outlining the central star) which were developed by the last of the La Tene, the Celts of Britain and Ireland.

The second influence in European Celtic Art is Classical (especially Greek ) floral ornament.

Fig. 2. This thin strip of openwork gold, from Eigenbilzer, Belgium, was probably part of an embellishment worked on to a plain, imported goblet. The piece makes repetitive, symmetrical use of the Classical lotus and palmette motif.

The third influence is an oriental one bringing with it, animals and masks. Personally, I doubt that the animal motif was itself new to Europe; non-domestic animal motifs can probably be traced to the European "Hunter Cultures", which pre-date the neolithic revolution of 3000 B.C.

(1) Here the term denotes all the decorative arts, metalwork and stonework are examples.

However, even if the conception of this motif was not original, the treatment of the animal motif in this Oriental manner was popular. The mask motif was, perhaps, a completely new motif in Europe.

Fig. 3. Shows part of a piece from Rodenbach, Rheinpfalz. The central human figure has bulging eyes and a strong eyebrow line. The pointed eyes and split hooves of the Rams are especially oriental.

The motifs are fused together within Celtic Art; The fundamental Characteristic of Celtic Art-in the British Isles and on the European mainland-is probably that whereas classical.,Hellenic tradition, the dominant tradition in the known world before the ascent of the Celts, subordinates the parts of an artistic work to the whole effect, the celtic tradition tends to subdivide the whole

The representation of human figures gives the clearest example of this tendency. In celtic art; human figures tend to become ornament when rigid and static elements of detail, each of which is more or less dominant, become dominant; Animated and naturalistic form is dissolved and reworked into a highly stylized geometric abstraction.

An interesting way by which to follow the development of this tendency-subordination, or dissolution or stylization of forms-is through Celtic coinage. Celtic coins were originally copies of especially Greek coins in naturalistic style. The progression of stylization is notably clear in fig. 4.

Cultures can only prosper and develop in an area of political stability. Politically, the La Tene were never united; the general cultural label hides many different peoples and tribes. The enormous Celtic expansion (fig.57) in the last four centuries B.C. lacked any kind of central direction or cohesion. In contrast was the expansion of their literate southern neighbours, the Romans, with whom the Celts inevitably came into conflict. In 390 B.C. members of the La Tene culture stood outside Rome, by 43 A.D. the La Tene culture had been swallowed up by the Roman cultural expansion. Only the north and west of Britain, and the island of Ireland, were not romanized. Rome arrived later in these areas in the form of Christianity. Such a cultural "compromise" repeated on the European mainland might have caused a more comprehensive recall of illuminated manuscripts in the Celtic style.

There were strong parallels between the Hiberno-British style of art, and that of La Tene. But this was partial only, the insularity of the islands allowed them to develop their own style, which is sometimes called the "insular" style.

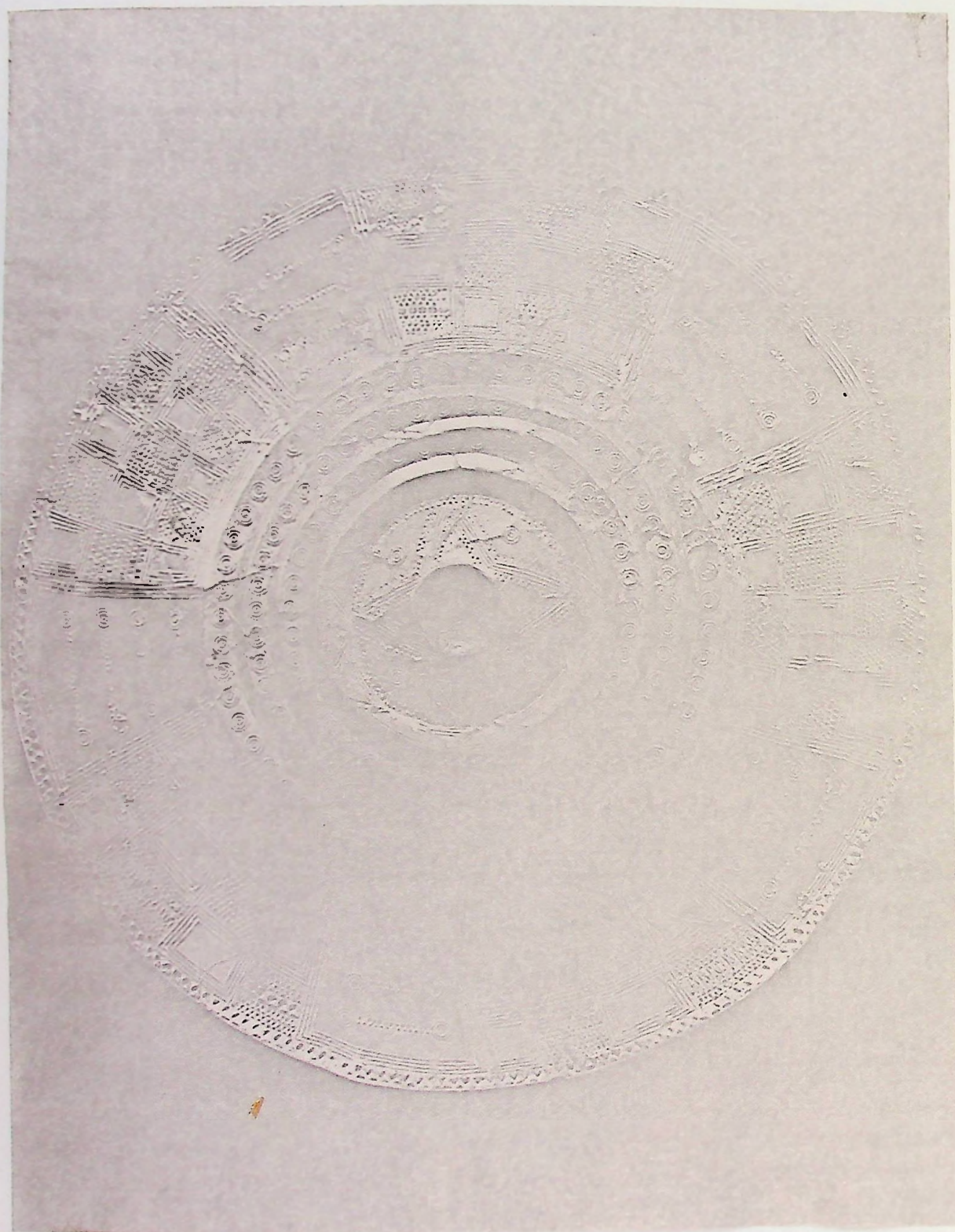


Fig 1.

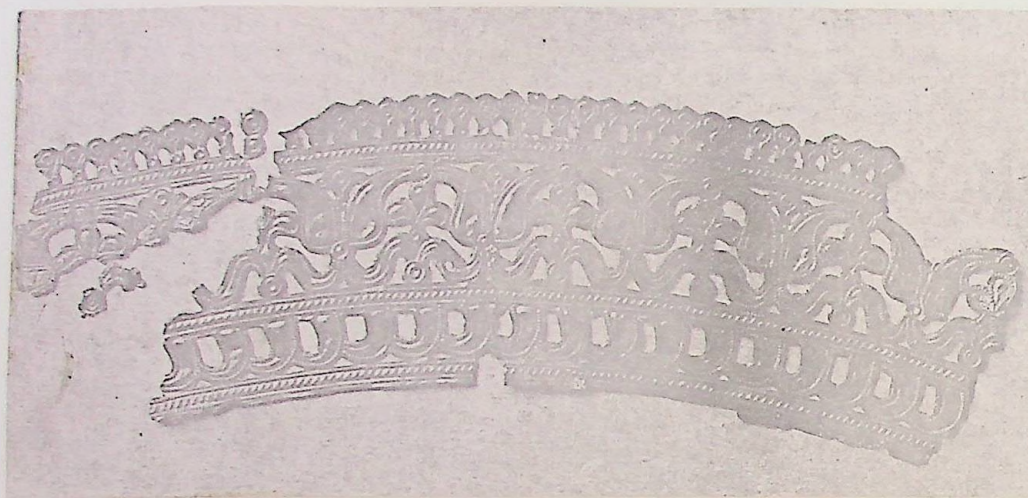


Fig. 2.

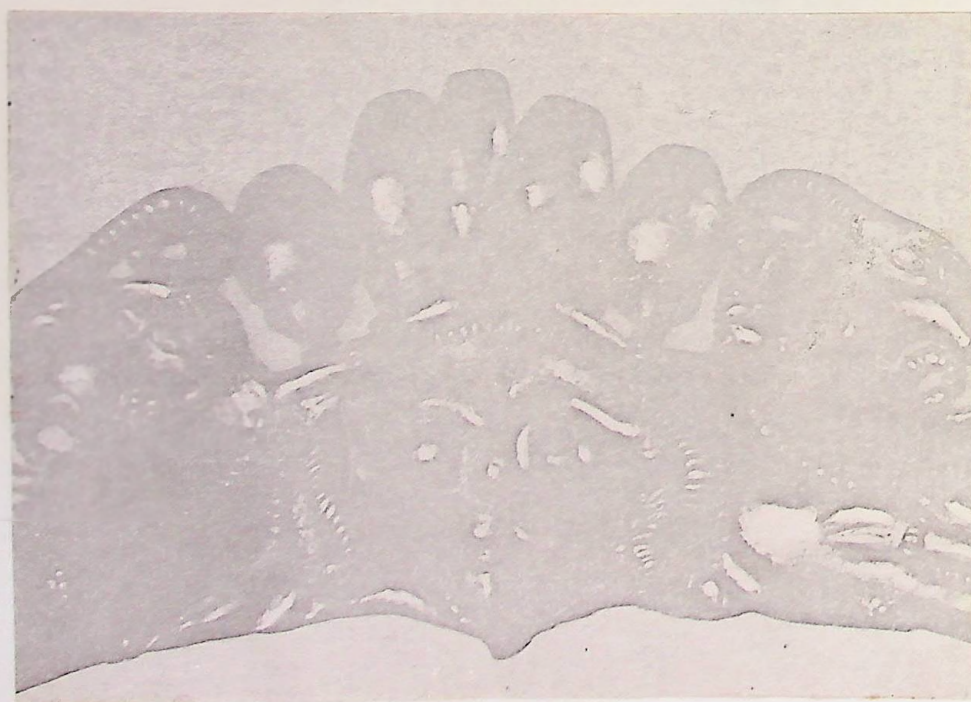


Fig 3.



Progressive stylization of imagery in Celtic coins: type imitating the gold stater of Philip II of Macedon (obverse, head crowned with laurels; reverse, chariot). (a) Arverni, 2d cent. B.C. (obverse and reverse); (b) Aulerci Cenomani, 2d cent. B.C. (obverse); (c) Armorican, 2d cent. B.C. (reverse); (d) Atrebates, 1st cent. B.C. (obverse and reverse).

Fig 4.





BOOK OF DURROW, fol. 84v  
*Symbol of the Eagle.*

FIG 6.

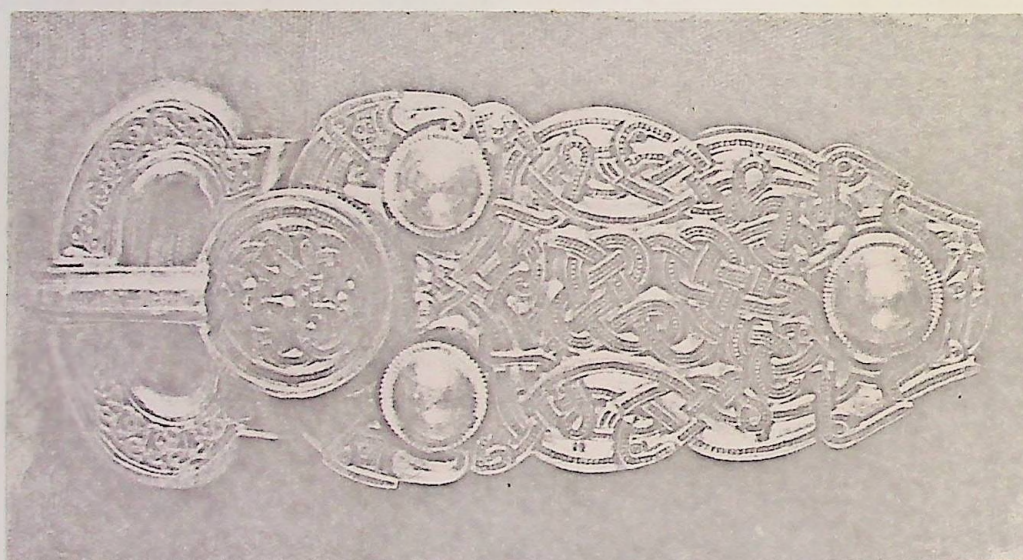


FIG 7.

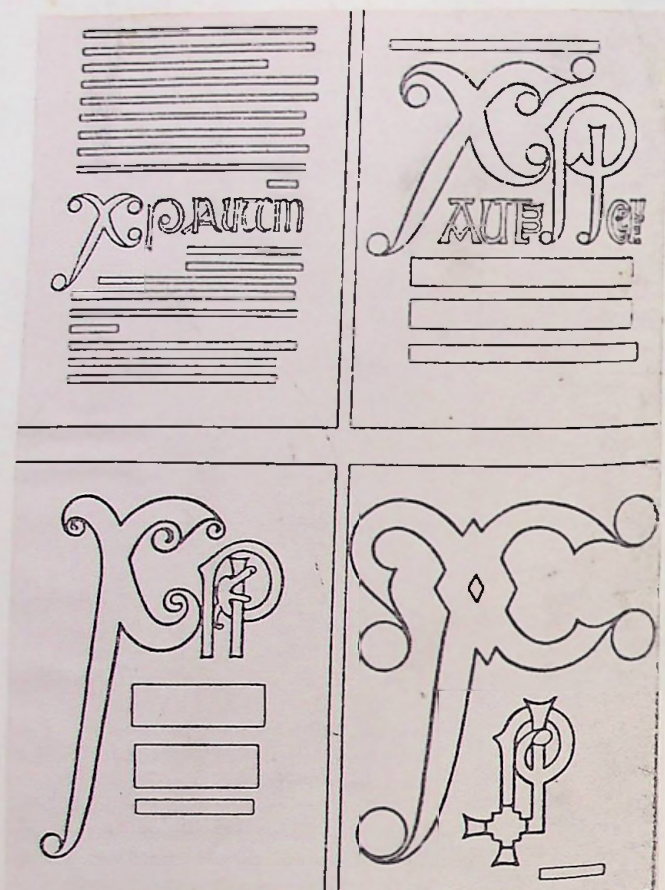


Fig 8..

Evolution of the Chi-Rho monogram in early Hiberno-British M.S.S. Left to Right, Top to Bottom; Durrow, Lindisfarne, St. Ball, Kells.

Fig 9

FIRST FIGURE

"BOOK OF KELLS "

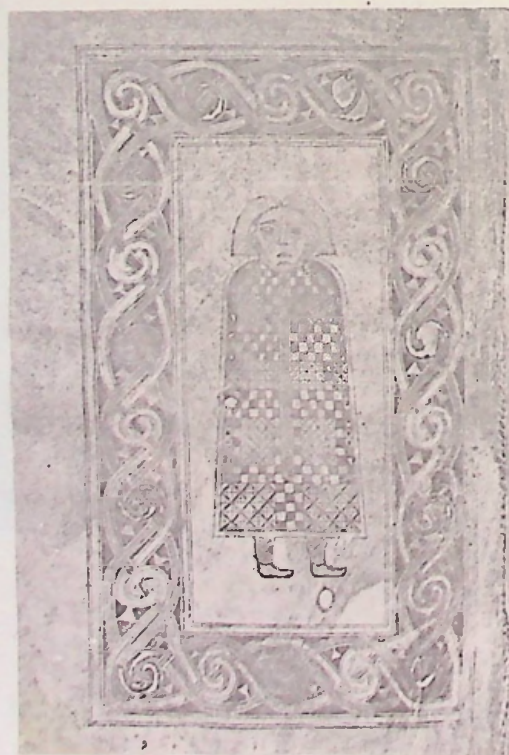




Fig 10



Fig 11.

DEVELOPMENT OF FIGURES IN " BOOK OF KELLS "

## FINALLY WE GET TO POINT OF CHAPTER

### OLD AND NEW TRADITIONS

Christian missionaries were educated in the Classical tradition, which was more concerned with narrative than pattern. Their wish to spread The Word also recommended to them the naturalistic representation of the human figure. However, the early church did not try to dominate the (Hiberno-British) culture to which they came, rather they tried to intergrate with it. Just as the Christian Church adapted the pagan Harvest Festival, for example, so it adapted pagan art. Indeed, the church preserved and developed every area of the native art, for example, committing the Irish myths to paper.

The "old" apiral was used alongside the "newer " language of animal interlace (from the European Celts) and Roman-Hellerister naturals (from Christianity ). The "old" tradition had no figured Scenes or Episodic illustration. The "New" tradition brought especially a move towards figurative art based on mediterranean models. From the eight century A.D. two elements of "insular" art were fusing successfully. First, the native, insular, pagan tradition; secondly, the foreign cosmopolitian Christian tradition.

### ORIGINS:

The view that the manuscripts in the "insular " tradition were purely Irish was first denied by A.W.Chapham ("The origins of Hiberno-Saxon art") Antiquity, FTT 1934 who concluded that the Irish "perhaps welded its component parts into one style but that this welding took place in Northumbria, in what is now N.E.England, in the second half of the seventh century A.D., and that the mature style was carried from there to Ireland.

A later critic, F.Masal, believed that the manuscripts definately identified as having been done in Ireland, were copies of a Northumbrian original. Recently R.L.S.Bruce-Mitford of the British museum, London says he believes that Celtic art achieved motivation in Northumbria after 664 A.D., that is after the departure of the Irish mission, which had originally founded the Northumbria "school ".

The Irish mission was on Iona from 635 A.D. until 664 A.D. when they clashed with the Augustrian tradition of Christianity, at the Synod of Whitby. Since the native Celtic population of Britian still existed within, or even alongside, Saxon areas in 664 A.D., and after it would seem plausible to claim that Ireland was NOT NECESSARILY the only possibly originator of Insular Celtic art. The famous gold buckle from the British "Sutton Hoo Treasure" ( 7th century B.C.) lends further sopport to this theory. However, probably nothing can be taken with certainty Fig. 6 and 7 show how the Eagle from the Book of Durrow, framed by a massive border of interlace has very similar strap-work ornamenting the Sutton Hoo Buckle.

To tell the Reader more about the origin of celtic design, here is a brief account of it.

Bronze age man left a distinctive mark on the tombs of his ancestors. The celts therefore inherited much from ages that went before him. He saw his art in abstract form. His patterns were complex and consisted of loops and spirals, that can be seen today cut into stone pillars and slabs, or used in the decoration of illuminated manuscripts.

The celtic period began a tradition that can be traced from the early Bronze Age right up to the coming of the Viking invasion and St. Patrick, in the 8th and 9th centuries. Ireland's art was closely related to the Celtic European culture that stretched from Spain and the Scandinavian countries. There was no real centre Communication between them was slow and difficult. In their language, myth, literature, and Art they were one.

The Christian Church was expanding rapidly. The contact with Northumbria meant that the Irish styles in celtic art began to be interchangeable, with Ireland, Scotland, and England forming a single cultural area.

The Irish scribes had developed an elegant, clear style and steady hand before they emigrated to England. They taught this to the English and now it is often impossible to tell the difference between Irish and Anglo-saxon manuscripts. Today these books are termed "Insular".

The Cathach of Columbia, written in the early part of the seventh century before the mission to Northumbria, is a manuscript unaffected by English art. The steady hand is already developed and the initials are incorporated into the text. The collection of motifs is taken from the La Tene art consisting of trumpet patterns and spirals.

The Book of Durrow was written a generation or so later and it is obvious how much had been changed. This book has still got all the old celtic designs but it also includes animal interlace derived from Anglo-Saxon art while The Cathach, an Irish book and The Book of Durrow belongs to the Anglo-Saxon world of the North. No one knows where the Durrow book was written. It is likely to have been influenced by an Irish scribe in Northumbria, where it was most likely illuminated.

The scribes images might have been influenced by Anglo-Saxon and Irish art also. If it had been written in Iona or Ireland then it must have been by a scribe who had spent some time in Britain. The Book of Durrow is the first of a beautiful series of Gospel books. Some were written in Northumbria (England) for certain, for example, "The Book of Lindisfarne, The Codex Amiatinus and the Echternach Gospels."

Among the tales that were part of the filidh's collection were an amount of myths that concerned themselves with the Supernatural World, which are referred to as the Mythological Cycle.

There existed also, what was generally known as the "native System", which classified these titles by cycle rather than theme. These went under the following headings, plunderings, cattle-raids, wooings, battles, voyages, advantages, elopements.....etc.

These tales are divided into three main categories.

1. The Mythological Cycle
2. The Ulster Cycle
3. The Fenian Cycle

These will now be discussed individually.

THE MYTHOLOGICAL CYCLE

world Book Encyclopedia C.CH.

1. The oldest cycle, which is preserved in the "Lebor Gabala". This cycle describes the early settlement in Ireland, through a succession of invasions by five supernatural races.

The most important race was the Tuatha De Danann, or "people of the Goddess Danu, these were the fourth of the five invading races and they were the source of most of the divinities that the Irish people worshipped before they became Christians in the 4000's A.D.

THE ULSTER CYCLE:

2. Centers on the court of King Cochobar at Ulster, probably before the time of Christ. These stories deal with the adventures of Couchobar, a great Irish hero who was very similar to the Greek hero Achilles, but Couchobar had many supernatural powers. For example, he could spit fire in battle and was also a magician and poet.

THE FENIAN CYCLE:

3. This is also called "Ossianic cycle", and it describes the hero Finn Mac Cool, his son Ossian, and the Fianna as his band of warriors were known as Finn and the Fianna were famous for their great strength and size, and Finn was known for his generosity and wisdom.

ULSTER CYCLE

Many stories about Cuchulainn appear in this cycle, the best known is, the Cooley Cattle Raid. In this story, Queen Maeve of Connaught ordered a raid on Ulster to capture a famous bull. However, the Ulster warriors led by King Couchobar, came to Cuchulainn's aid, and drove the invaders out of the country.

Queen Maeve plotted revenge against Cuchulainn, and several years later used supernatural means to cause his death.

Animals are especially associated with the Celts but the three horned bull is especially associated. The stag was related to Cernunnos, the stag being the ram headed serpent, and in a way these were all closely related to the animal world. In addition records comprise of boars, horses, dogs, bears etc., as well as fish and various types of birds, all of them more or less connected with certain deities. The boar is probably the most notable of all these super human creatures. He is seen as a destructive creature, usually who leads his hunters to the otherworld. He is generally

thought to be bird-like. His mythological importance is connected with the fact that pork was the celts choice of food both in this world and in the next.

In legends, the otherworld (land of the dead ) food is represented by a pig which is killed and cooked each evening, and is alive the next morning.

It is not strange to also find in folktales supernatural horses that carry mortal men to the otherworld, but they played a sympathetic role. Horse-racing was a seasonal assembly and one of the pleasures associated with the other-world.

Magic birds are numerous, a characteristic celtic motif is to find swans linked with a silver chain. Birds are mentioned in almost all legends, especially the happy otherworld. They were thought to put men to sleep with the sweetness of their music. These may correspond to the birds that accompany a goddess on a number sculptures.

There is a great wealth of animal and bird imagery in Celtic mythology, and especially the intermingling of animal and human forms. This points to the coexistence of inferior or primitive divinity. This (f) view is based on the assumption that there was a gradual change from a zoomorphic (animal) to an anthropomorphic (bird) but there is no real evidence.

"The otherworld" that was known to the celts allowed all imaginative flow with the natural and supernatural merging together freely.

FOOTNOTES:Myth:

A myth can be described as an expression of religious beliefs. The scribes who wrote these stories were Christian monks and they did not have to believe in this history or fiction. It is presumed that they had to know these stories before they illustrated them, as one would have to know them today if intending to illustrate these same stories..

The Filidh;

The filidh was a Gaelic professional poet whose duties were to know and preserve the tales and genealogies and to compose poems that recalled the past glory of the ruling class.

They could enforce a curse, which could ruin a man's reputation and even cause physical damage or even death. He could be penalized by law for abuse of the curse belief in its curse was strong and also continued until modern times.

After Ireland became Christian in the 5th Century the filidh took the function of the outlaw Druids who were a powerful class of scholars.

## Chapter 1.

This chapter looks at, and describes the  
Celtic manuscripts and their purpose.

The Cathach of St. Columba.

The Book of Durrow.

The Lichfield Gospels.

The Lindisfarne Gospels.

The Book of Kells.

because they are the only form of historical accounts,  
religious writings, in fact writings of any kind.

## C H A P T E R 2.

Chapter two;

This chapter looks at, and describes the Celtic manuscripts and their purpose.

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The Ecternach Gospels.

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## INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER TWO

The history of Irish illumination was a long one, by the end of the eleventh century. It started in the early sixth century or early seventh century with the initials of the Cathach. The fantastic Books of Kells belongs to the ninth century. Because of the Viking invasions only fragments remain that belonged to the tenth century. Because the destruction was so strong, Brian Boru had to send beyond the seas for new books to replenish the Irish libraries that were plundered.

The Irish manuscripts that remain today belonged to the eleventh and twelfth century. They lack the richness of manuscripts of earlier times. They lack figured scenes. The decoration consists of ornamented capitals, which involve simple letters drawn on a coloured background or complicated mazes of ornaments. Nevertheless, these books are very attractive and have a certain quality about them still. The repertoire, which consists of beasts and vegetables- do not depart from that of earlier manuscripts, but the treatment is more flowing and has less deliberate sharpness.

Because of their poor appearance and bad presentation, these manuscripts have long been neglected. Not only because of their artistic quality, but because they are good chronological and geographical landmarks. It is important to turn to them for reference if we want to find out what idea of the evolution of Irish art in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

None of the manuscripts are earlier than 1070. About twenty manuscripts survive that were in existence before the Norman Conquest (1170). Besides evangeliaries and psalters, there also exists text-books and a few large compilations of Poems as well as texts in Latin and in Irish.

The collections of historical texts in Irish and Latin are; the Chronicle of Marianus Scottus of Mainz, written in Germany under his dictation by an Irish Scribe; a fragment of the so-called "Annals of Tigernach" which is copied in the first pages of Rawlinson Ms.B. 502 in the Bodleian Library; the collection of miscellaneous texts, poems etc., which constitutes the "Lebor na Huidre" (Book of the Dun Cow) in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin and the "Book of Leinster" which has been identified with the manuscript referred to in old texts as the "Book of Naughaval".

Some of these manuscripts are dated, fairly well. The book of Dun Cow was partly written by Mael Muire Mac Celechair, who died in Clonmacnoise in 1106. One of the pages from Glendalough is dated by a marginal entry in 1106; the colophons of Harley Ms. 1802 show that it was written in Armagh in 1138; the compiler of the "Book of Leinster" was an abbot of the Monastery of Terryglass, near Lough Derg, who copied most of it between 1151 - 1161.

For many manuscripts it is only possible to know where they were written but not their exact date.

The conclusion that one is tempted to adapt is that the important monasteries such as Clonmacnoise, Glendalough, maybe Armagh, remained faithful to a very traditional type of ornamental capital.

The Book of the Dun Cow seem to be the work of a group of Clonmacnois Scribes. It has been a faithful companion of St. Ciaran, the founder of Clonmacnois. When he was on his way to study in Clonard, its skin was kept in the monastery and it was believed that if one laid on it when dying it would guarantee a happy journey to the "Otherworld". It is not clear how it is connected with the manuscript, perhaps the book was kept wrapped in the skin or looked in the same chest.

These manuscripts are the oldest that can be attributed to the Clonmacnois Monastery. Their decoration consists mainly of enlarged letters ending in finely drawn animal heads. There is an elaborate capital in the Book of the Dun Cow, this is the Repertoire of letters which are found in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.

It remains possible that the "Psalter of St. Caimin" was also written in Clonmacnois and because of this the script remains richer and more complex. When it reached the Franciscan historian, Michael O'Lery, before this it had been kept in the monastery of Inis Cealtra where St. Caimin lived in the seventh century - this is where its traditional name comes from. Inis Cealtra is near Clonmacnois. The commentaries seem to be written in the hand very similar to the Dun Cow scribes, it is possible that it is another work of the same scriptorium. It is dated to the late eleventh century.

The book is fairly large (10 inches x 13½ inches) and is a different type of work to the two other manuscripts. It is written with great care and accuracy. Extremely good care has been taken with the layout of each page. The capitals are very simple but they are inserted into the text with great harmony of colour.

Glendalough seems to have used a repertoire of capitals similar to those of Clonmacnois. From the De Abaco of Gerbert of Aurillac. The initials here are similar to those of the Dummond Missal, which is another Glendalough manuscript. This is a small volume (6 inches x 4½ inches) and is in the Pierpont-Morgan Library in New York. It contains a missal which is preceded by a calendar and has Irish poems scattered throughout its margins. It also contains a poem in the form of a dialogue between St. Kevin and St. Ciaran of Seir in the last page. It was written in St. Kevin's monastery in Glendalough. It was written after 1061, this is obvious from names mentioned in the calendar. Its decoration consists only of ornamental capitals with animal heads, some small spirals and colour fillings. They are made up of the same style as the De Abaco. Then designs are full of imagination and are very rich which is not expected because they are only small pages, but their inspiration is very traditional.

## DESCRIPTION OF CELTIC MANUSCRIPTS.

### ORNAMENTAL MOTIFS:

The two basic types of linear ornament are; the dynamic, curvilinear motifs which include spirals, scrolls, and curves ("trumpet pattern"). The interlace, broad or thin. Other motifs are; Geometrical devices including "Key Pattern", "Diagonal feet", and "Step pattern"., zoomorphic motifs, simple human figures treated in abstraction.

### THE "CATHACH" OF ST. COLUMBA.

Dating from 500 A.D. this is probably the earliest manuscript in the "insular" tradition. The ornamental motifs are isolated from one another on the same page or on a different page; Synthesis is a characteristic of later work. Curvilinear motifs represented include the spiral and the "trumpet". The zoomorphic motifs are limited to small animal heads - there is no bird or dog, as found in the later manuscripts.

Early developments in the tradition which are almost certainly of purely Irish origin are; 1. the flexible, elastic type of initial with split stems (providing the space which was to be decorated in later manuscripts) 2. the progressive grading down in size of the opening letters on a page, the letters merging into the ordinary text hand (fig.8). These developments are fundamentally different from the design of a rigid and detached initial letter followed by normal size text, and are therefore forerunners of synthesis.

### THE BOOK OF DURROW

Dating from 680 A.D. that is after the departure of the Irish mission to Iona, this manuscript displays more intricate and minute interlace, though this element only appears on the "carpet pages" and as a framework for the Evangelist Symbols. Also the interlace is often loose, with untied knots. In the initials there are, as yet, only simple spirals and very thin twists. The spirals are often coiled around a patterned centre and connected, by curved triangles, with the foliage element. The symbol for the Evangelist Matthew (fig.9.) shows how close, at this stage of the tradition, were the different arts. The intricate geometric patterns built up from small units, like those on the cloakwork of this figure, derived from Cloisne work in metal.

### THE ECTERNAGH GOSPELS:

Dating probably from the late 680<sup>s</sup> A.D., this manuscript displays symbols partly drawn geometrically. The Leo symbol for St. Luke is drawn with a pair of compasses (fig. 10) Though still limited in type of ornamentation (there is no bird or dog, yet, for example) the representation, also the different elements are more integrated into an all-over design.

Part of an illuminated page from the Book of Durrow containing the opening of St. Mark's Gospel. Because the words are so highly ornamented it requires expertise to read them.

The first letter combines I and N to begin the word INITIUM : the next two lines say EVANGELII HESU CHRISTI (abbreviated) and the next text then continues FILII DEI SICUT SCRIPTUM IN ESEIA PROPHETA;

"The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaias the Prophet.

( The interlace and spiral patterns are traditionally Celtic, going back to pre-Christian Art.)



FIG 1.

### THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS

Date from 697-698 A.D.

There is a remarkable increase in the number of colours used in the manuscript. The Book of Durrow uses just three colours ; green, yellow, red. Lindisfarne uses forty-five distinct tones or shades. Several pigments for each tone; for example, three Hues, three yellows, two reds etc. The bird and dog appear. The "Carpet pages" - the glory of Lindisfarne- and the Evangelist Symbols are assumed to be typical of a mature "insular" type developed in Northumbria by local pupils of the Irish Mission. The design framework for all the later manuscripts including Lindisfarne, the integrated initial and text, and the split stem are usually accepted as purely Irish origin.

### THE BOOK OF KELLS

Dating from 800 A.D.

Classical Christianity brought with it a tradition of figurative art based on mediterranean models, "The Virgin and Child" page for example, was probably suggested by a Byzantine model like the Madonna and Child icon in Catherine Ust monastery, Mt. Sinai, which is very similar. A comparison of figures 9,10,11, illustrates the development of figurative art in the manuscript. This book shows that the community of artistic culture between Ireland, Scotland and Northumbria carried on through-out the eight and ninth centuries.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE MANUSCRIPTS:

### RELIGIOUS:

The pagans expressed a conception of the universe through imagery and symbolism. The Christian conception was superimposed on this. "Primitive " art has always characterized by a rigid and formal language of signs and patterns. Bearing this in mind, had the spiral motif, for example lost its original meaning, so that it could be used by Christians as mere decoration ? Is it not more likely that the Christian Church, merely redirected the power of the Symbol ? If the spiral is a pagan symbol for the sun, could it not be redirected as a Christian symbol for the son ?

### PRACTICAL:

The manuscript definitely served to record "the word ". Could they also have served as an aid to meditative prayer ? The Knot or spiral, a symbol of eternity, could have been used as a device for concentrating the mind on prayer in the same way as does an incantation. In this tradition there are manuscripts illustrated by which contemplate the eternal spiral.

### DECORATIVE:

The manuscript must also have been decorated to the glory of God. Originally beauty and religious significance combined in purely geometrical shapes, which were probably shorthand for some thing whose meaning was adapted and forgotten, and increasingly took on a decorative function. Finally, decorative art would rely for its "significance " on something outside itself, on the written word and relevant illustrations, rather than a non-representative, non-naturalistic "language".

Suggested ways in which pagan symbols might have been transcribed by Christianity;

#### INTERLACING:

A stylized representation of running water, probably a pagan fertility symbol. This could become a Christian symbol of purification and/or continuity of the spirit life

#### SPIRAL:

The latter, probably pagan sun or fire symbol. The "step" and "key " patterns derived from the swastika, are similar symbols. Probably these would be transposed as symbols for Christian spirit or God's divine love.

I end with a quotation from Lady Wilde ("Ancient Legends, mystic charms, and superstitions of Ireland "1888); "Early Irish art illustrates in a very remarkable manner those distinctive qualities of Irish nature which we know from the legendary traditions have characterized our people from the earliest times .... All the reverential, artistic, fanciful, and subtle evidences, of the peculiar Celtic spirit find a full and significant expression in the wonderful splendours of Irish early art. "

### CHAPTER 3.

### INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER THREE:

This chapter is on the history of the Book of Kells, with a study of the manuscript. This is the best remaining example of Celtic art, its pages are filled with the most varied examples of techniques used throughout this time.

The Book of Kells has been in Trinity since the seventeenth century. Originally it came from Kells, Co. Meath, a monastery had been established in the early ninth century. This was the time of the Viking invasions. It was built by the monks of the monastery of Iona, which is off the west-coast of Scotland. The island of Iona, went back to the Irish St. Columba, he left his native land and settled there in the middle of the sixth century.

This monastery became a missionary centre to the population of Irish origin of the west-coast. It was the headquarters of the Columban community which had many houses in both Ireland and Scotland. During and because of Viking Raids, the monks moved across to Kells.

We are told that "the great gospel of Columkille", which was the chief relic of the western world, was stolen during the night from the sacristy at Kells. It is believed to be the "Book of Kells" as we know it today. A short time afterwards it was found "under a sod", deprived of its gold. This violence will account for the missing pages at the beginning and end of the book.

The Kells monastery ceased to exist because of the twelfth reform in Ireland and its property was moved to the new bishopric of Meath.

The old monastic church became the parish church of Kells, and the book remained there.

In 1654, the Cromwellian cavalry was quartered in the church of Kells, the governor of the town sent the book to Dublin, in safety. A few years later, after 1661, it was presented to Trinity College by Henry Jones, who was bishop of Meath.

All the manuscripts that are known have been written in what we term "Irish script" or Continental script. The Irish script was elaborated in Ireland during the sixth and seventh centuries, from various scripts of Roman books brought into Ireland from the time of its conversion to Christianity in the fifth century. The writing in the Book of Kells is the work of an early Irish school of Calligraphy. It is recognised that before the arrival of St. Patrick in about 430, the inhabitants were without a written literature of any kind.

Christianity obviously had made its way amongst the people before the landing of Patrick and it is possible that there were a

few Latin manuscripts used in the early Irish monasteries.

Tradition tells us that St. Patrick wrote alphabets himself, for young men who were chosen for a clerical career. He therefore is remotely connected with the Book of Kells. It is he who helped by the artistic taste of the schools of Irish penmanship we are grateful to for the growth of early Irish manuscript writing. This is such a strong characteristic in manuscripts of this time.

The most remarkable feature of this fine type of writing is that although it owes its development to Ireland it has nothing Irish about it. The models used were Roman, models used in most manuscripts of western Europe. Having obtained their models, the Irish scribes made their own interpretations, and went on practising it for generations with much uniformity.

The high standard did not result from single individuals but from a number of schools and the improvements of generations. In the case of its illuminations, there was more than one illuminator at work on the script.

The Irish monks did not only perfect the letters of the alphabet in their schools but they took them to other countries when going on missions. An example of Irish influence is to be seen in a manuscript in St. Peter's, Rome, dated 496 - 523 A.D. Its likely to have been written in Italy where the Irish influence was predominant.

#### A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE BOOK OF KELLS:

It is a Latin copy of the four Gospels. It is written on calf vellum. The quality of the vellum is quite good but its appearance is very uneven. Some pages are very thick, and are leather like; while others are soft and pliable. It is a large volume ( Dimensions; No of pages ). The book is incomplete, and has been rebound several times. The fantastic lavishness of the decoration and the unusually large size of the Book show clearly that it was an altar-book, it was probably left open as an ornament during ceremonies where display was necessary.

#### THE TECHNIQUES OF PAINTING USED IN THE BOOK OF KELLS:

A quill is mentioned by Sir Edward Sullivan mostly, but this is only connected with writing, and with the drawing of the lines. The remarkable even width of lines that are very straight, point to a less flexible instrument, perhaps made of wood. It is obvious that the scribes used mechanical aids, such as compasses, rulers and set squares. Sometimes it is not possible to find the centre of circles. It is of course, possible that they used what we know today as

"French Curves ", this might have been used for the angels wings etc.

Very diluted ink may have been used to trace the contours of patterns. The painter then painted in the colour and finally drew the containing lines and details in the usual gall-ink of the script. The drawing kept its sharpness in this way.

There is no way of knowing what sort of brushes were used but it is known that they must have been very fine cones. The brush must have come to a fine point. Marten, ( which is got from an American animal ) seems to answer to these requirements.

The pigments used were probably dissolved with water and a binding medium, like glue or egg white was added.

The colours used were made up largely of animal and vegetable extracts. Ultramarine remained the most expensive pigment in the Middle Ages, ranking with gold. The range of colours used in this Book are not the same as in the earlier manuscripts. They did not use blue, probably because ultramarine was unobtainable or too expensive. The colours they used are red lead, orpiment (which is a mineral, usually found in soft yellow foliated masses ) white lead and ox-gall.

These colours have much in common with the Book of Lindisfarne. In this book the colours all consist of simple washes of one pigment. The Book of Kells painters however make extensive use of white pigment instead of reserving the bare vellum like, the Book of Lindisfarne. There is a noticeable absence of gold in these manuscripts. It appears on only one initial in the Book of Lindisfarne. The Book of Kells, painters are very sensitive to its absence and as a substitute they used the yellow of orpiment.

When the ornamentation of the Book of Kells is broken up into component parts, it is found to have four different divisions. Patterns that are composed of geometrical combinations ( straight or curved lines form the most important elements ) by the spiral or interlacing.

Zoomorphic forms ( Animal forms )

Phyllomorphic ( Leaf and plant forms )

These natural forms, though they are so unnaturally treated are derived from nature.

#### FIGURE REPRESENTATIONS:

The first division ( Geometrical patterns ) which consist of spiral and interlacement, can be described as Celtic art in its most characteristic expression. These geometrical patterns whether they are single motifs or in combination are often woven together very tastefully. In the depiction of humans, the spirals recur

in the ears, jaws, and function of the limbs with the body. The geometric patterns include such variations as the trumper pattern, the interlacement pattern .....etc, which will now be discussed individually.

# THE TRUMPET PATTERN:

This could also be called a divergent spiral and is composed of two winding lines which diverge into a trumpet form, the open end is closed by a curved line. The spiral design was a favourite, and was an elaborate character which was applied to a variety of objects as a surface decoration. It was applied to such objects as, shields, helmets, horse trappings and personal possessions. In some types, it seems, that it has been developed under the influence of floral schemes. If this is true, then that might account for its force and freedom, such qualities are very rare in geometrically constructed designs.

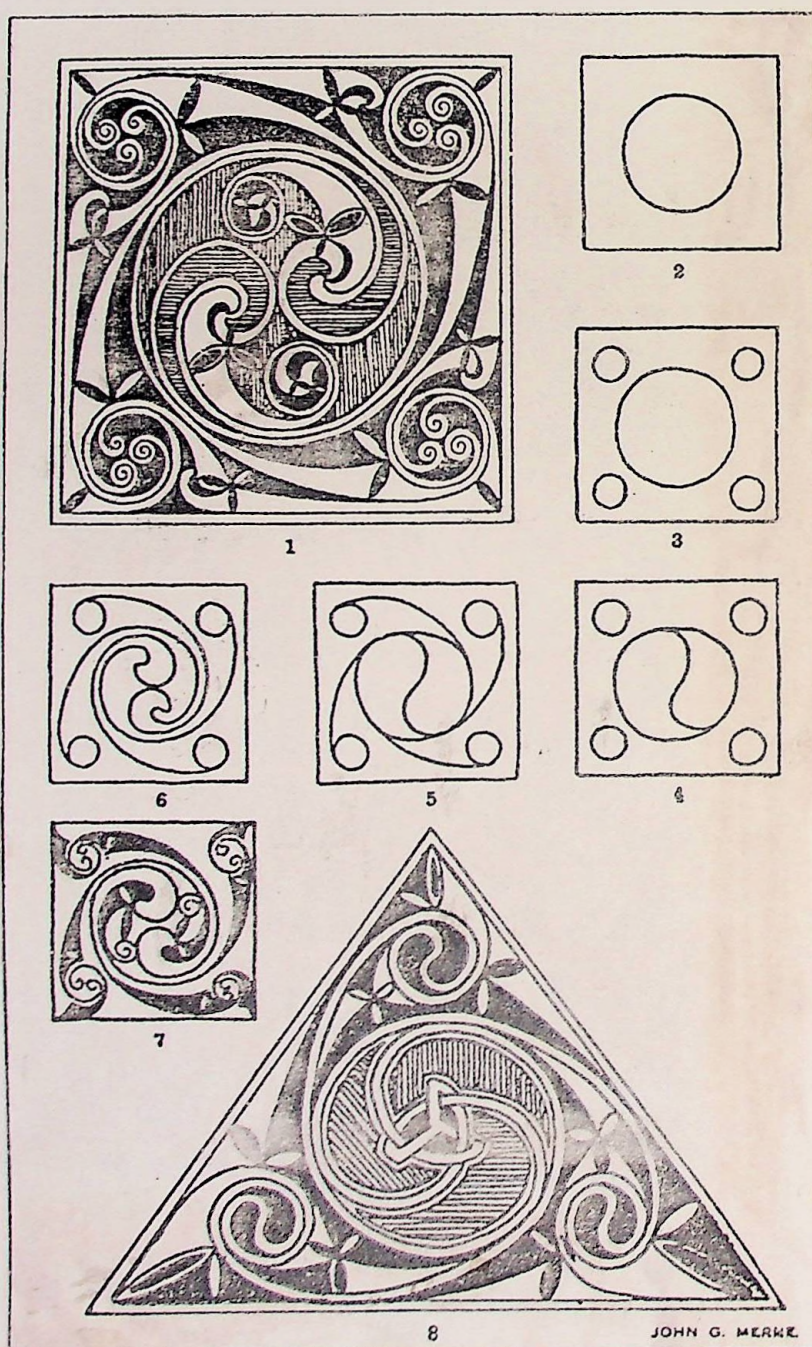


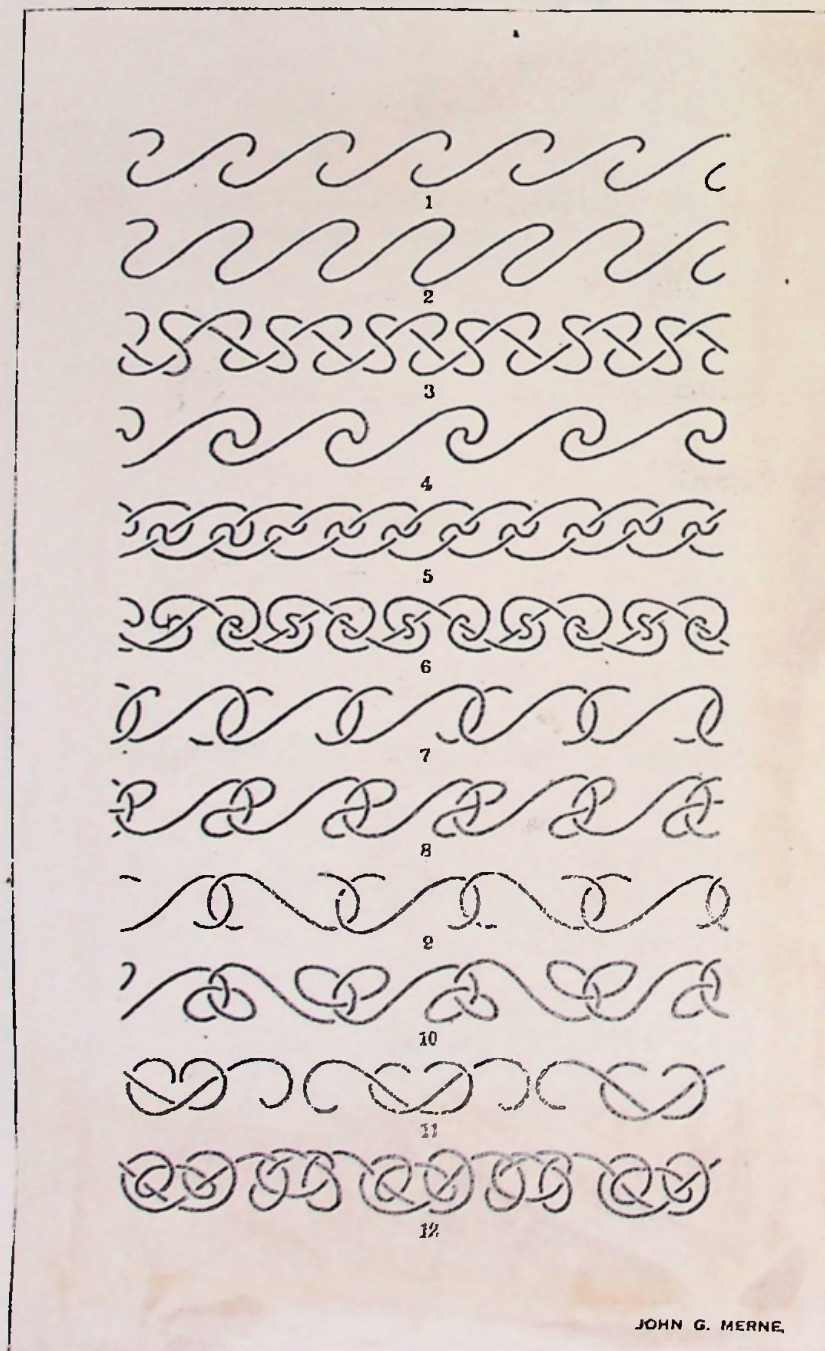
FIG 1.

### THE INTERLACEMENT PATTERN:

This pattern may be described as a surface decoration composed of one or more ribbons of uniform size. It can be twisted, plaited, or knotted. It occurs in a variety of forms, and is often laid in squares, circles, oblongs, triangles etc.

These are very intricate forms and show the intelligence of the draughtsman. If it is compared with the spiral ornament, the interlacing looks very mechanical.

The origin of this characteristic feature of Celtic design will probably be found in the remains of North Italy dated from the second or third century. It only became popular in Ireland in the seventh century.



JOHN G. MERNE,

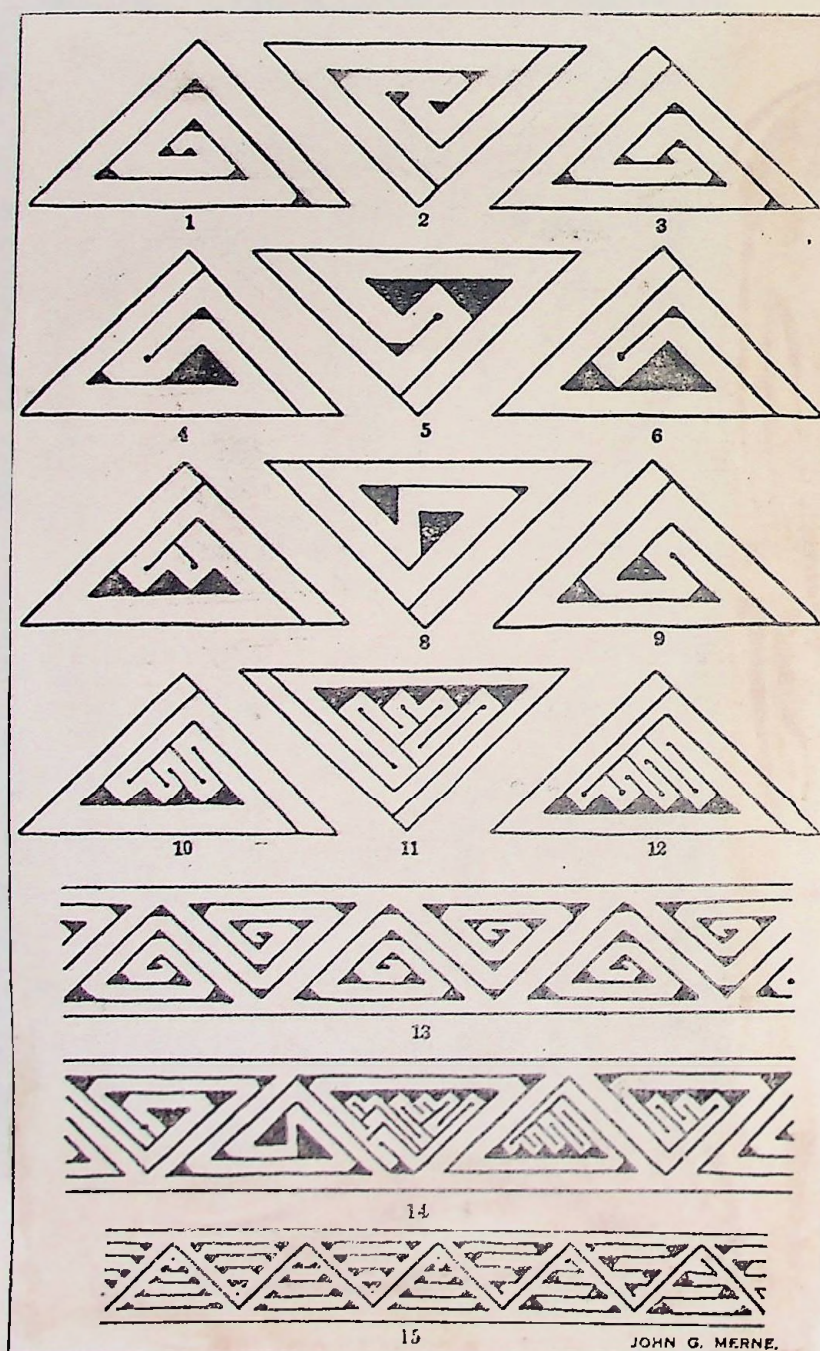
FIG. 2.

### THE FRET PATTERN:

The fret pattern is used in a considerably number of forms, it may be used for filling panels in both borders and initials. There is a bending in the links, at certain points, at angles of  $45^\circ$ . The triangular fret pattern has evolved from the primitive line decoration found on funeral urns.

### ZOOMORPHIC OR ANIMAL FORMS

The artists never had any intension to depict these animal forms in their natural shapes. Whatever they happen to be, fish, peacock, horse, dog, cat, rat, cock, lizard, dragon, etc.....they are all part of a world apart and distinct relations of the lion, calf and the eagle, of the Evangelical Symbols.



JOHN G. MERNE.

FIG 3.

PLANT FORMS OF DECORATION:

These appear as lightly sketched branches with leaves and flowers. Sometimes they proceed from vases. The scrolls are of a more elaborate nature which can be seen to fill in, as a surface decoration, long narrow panels in the illuminated pages.

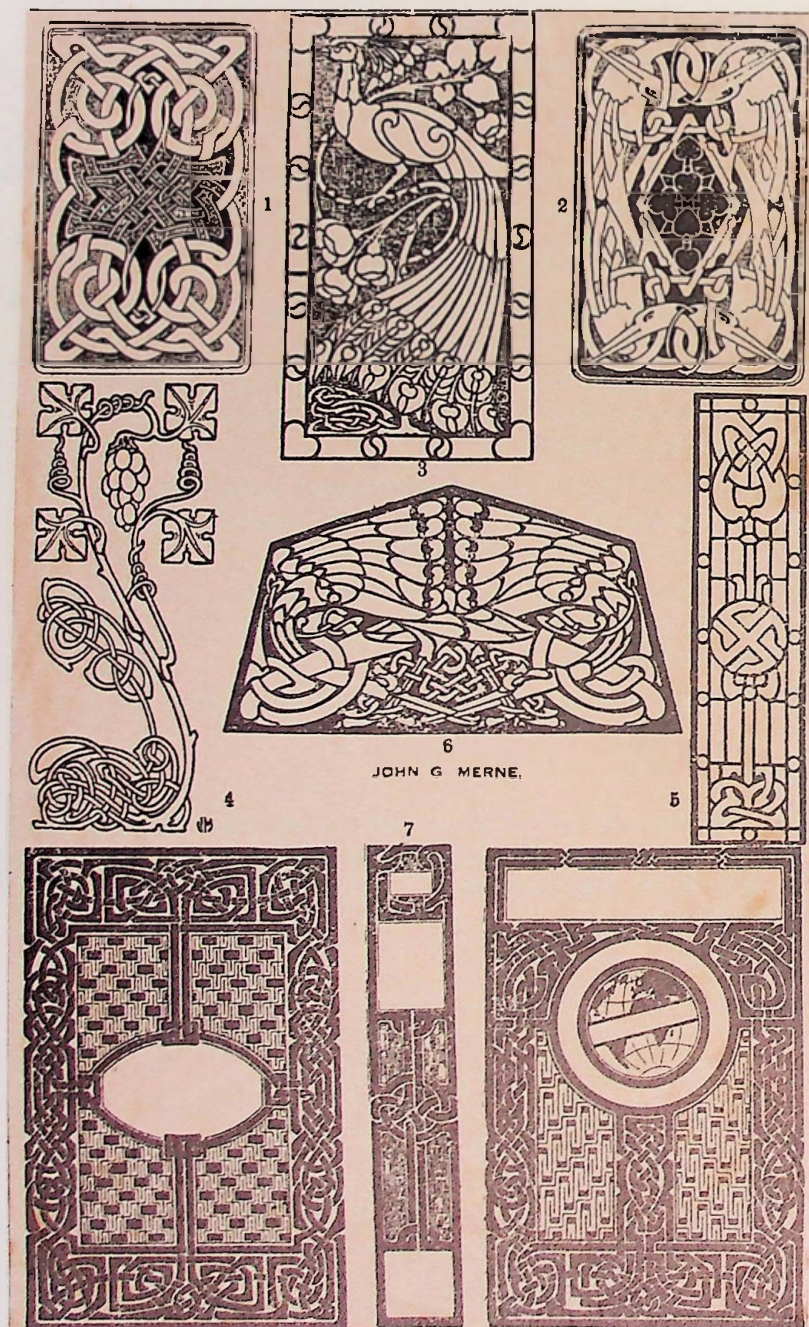
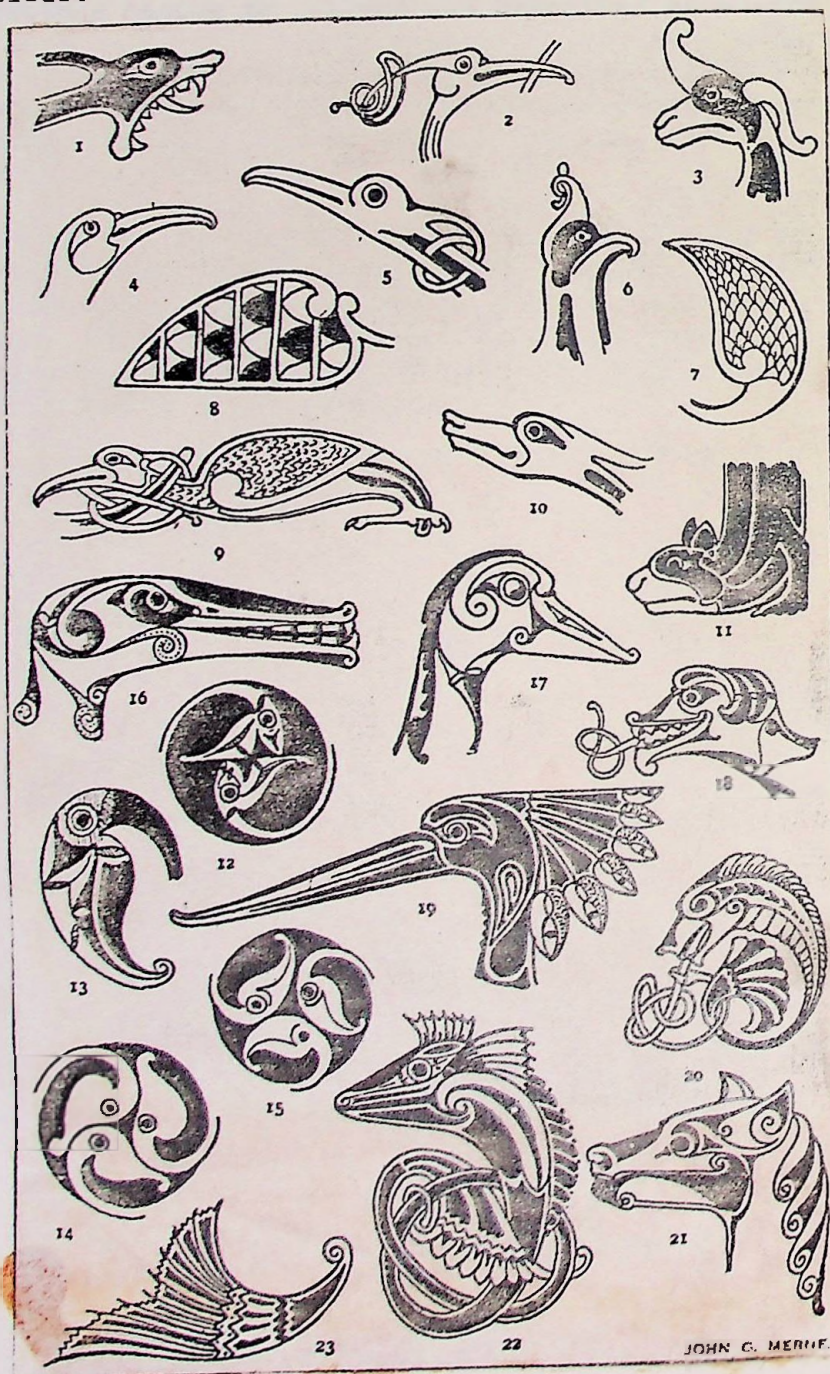


FIG 4

SERPENTINE DECORATION:

Because of the frequency of serpentine forms throughout the manuscript, it is suggested that these forms are connection with the worship of ophidian repites. Before the coming of Christianity, the worship of serpents was practised, though not widely. It may be the serpent that St. Patrick banished from the country. It is impossible not to want to look for the other parts of their bodies, which are often concealed or passing into different strange creatures.

There is great variety in these forms, often very extravagant but more times delicate and simple. They must have originated in the East. It is found that the serpentine bands of Irish ornaments appear in the oldest Egyptian manuscripts, with a similarity of colour.



JOHN C. MERRELL

Fig 5.

This is the fourth major division in the Book of Kells ornament;

The strangest of the ornamentation in the manuscript, is of course the representation of the human figure. This looks childish and grotesque to onlookers today, but it probably was viewed by its contemporaries with a very different eye. Sometimes the figure is covered with an intricate interlacement pattern, and the colours that are used are used without any regard to nature.

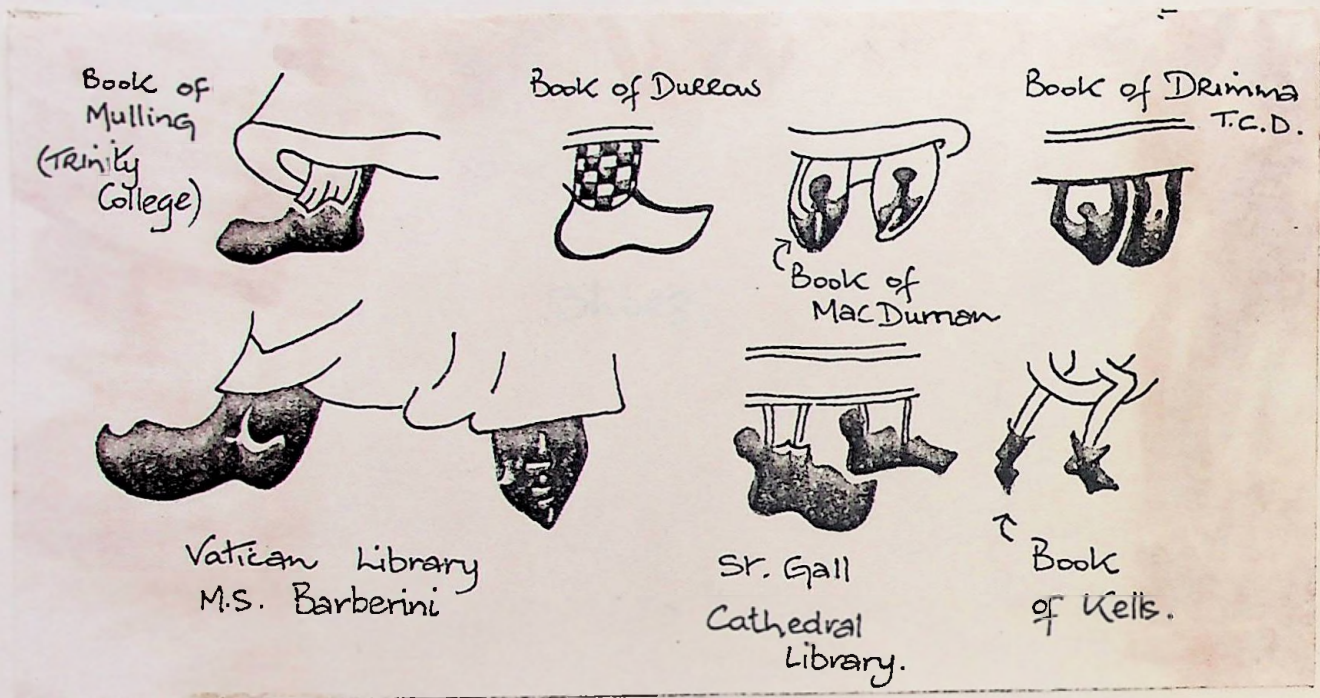
George Bain claims that the representations of human figures by Celtic artists were influenced by the pagan laws that forbade them from copying the works of the almighty creature.

A simple explanation as to the weird figures of either saint or man, could be to term them, "heraldic". Because of a deliberate avoidance of a resemblance to humanity, the idea for reverence for holy things is strengthened. R.A.S. Macalister remarks that "all persons of importance native to Ireland are described as having Golden Hair". Most persons in subordinate positions and those who are spoken of with scorn are Dark-Haired. As a rule yellow hair is described as long and flowing. Dark hair is close-chopped. Ruling classes are marked with long flowing locks. Enslaved classes, with close chopped black or brown hair.

King Cormac Mac Airt is described like this in the Book of Ballymote. "Hair-braids slightly curled, all golden upon him, like blue bells his eyes, like the sheen of a dark blue blade his eye brows". Yellow hair, bluish eyes with black eye lashes and eyebrows are plentiful with the youth of north and west Scotland. The Book of Kells shows many of this type.

There is an obvious difference in the type of shoes used in the various manuscripts.

These are typical examples.



The shoes in general, have pointed toes. All, except the one from the Book of Durrow, are in some way shaded, or darkened. The book of Mulling, St. Gall and the one from the Vatican library are boot-like with white highlights and their garments are generally more flowing.

## THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In this volume the history of the United States is presented in a clear and concise manner. The author has carefully selected the most important events and figures of the American past, and has presented them in a way that is both interesting and informative.

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## CHAPTER 4.

In this chapter we will discuss the history of the United States from the end of the Civil War to the present day. We will cover the Reconstruction era, the Gilded Age, and the Progressive Era.

The Reconstruction era was a period of time when the United States was rebuilding itself after the Civil War. It was a time of great change and growth, and it was a time when the United States was becoming a more unified nation.

In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was passed, which abolished slavery. This was a major step towards the end of slavery in the United States. In 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment was passed, which gave citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States. This was another major step towards the end of slavery in the United States. In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment was passed, which gave the right to vote to all male citizens. This was the final step towards the end of slavery in the United States.

A series of events led to the Reconstruction era. In 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, which declared that all slaves in the United States were free. This was a major step towards the end of slavery in the United States. In 1865, the Civil War ended, and the United States was reunited. This was the beginning of the Reconstruction era.

## THE REVIVAL OF IRISH ART IN THE LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY :

In this chapter the possible causes for the development of celtic design are discussed. Modern celtic art as we know it today has survived, and still retains a large amount of its original form.

The revival which began in the 1830's was founded upon the scholarship and discoveries of a new school of Scientific Archeology whose greatest men were George Petrie, John O'Donovan and Eugene Curry. Such intellectual responsibility, and the discoveries of the treasures; The Cross of Cong, Tara Brooch, (found 1880 ) and the Ardagh Chalice ( found 1868).

This revival was popularised by exhibitions, by illustrated books, ( i.e. Henry O'Neill, " Fine Art of Ireland " published 1803) and by jewellery after the ancient style ( i.e. Dublin firm of Weir and Waterhouse ).

From the 1860's large initial letters were common at the beginning of chapters and designs at end of chapters. The book covers, too, were being decorated with original interlaced and curvilinear ornamentations based on the art of 1,000 years past. Pottery, paintings, woodcarvings and silverware also decorated in this manner.

The "Cromlech of Howth ", a long poem by Sam Ferguson was published in 1861. The illustrations are by Margaret Stokes, the green and gold leather cover is beautifully ornamented on front and back with interlaced designs and inside are ornate illuminated initials and designs based on those of the Book of Kells and the Book of Durrow.

By the 1860's and 1870's, the "new" art had found its way into the mind of the majority; Shamrocks were replaced by interwoven art on gravestones and crosses.

Charles Russell produced, especially between 1883-1885 many examples of interlace-design pottery.

In 1890, The National Museum was opened, and prototypes were set on permanent display. By the end of the century, book plates, costumes, and costume-jewellery, G.A.A. medals, tombstones, harps, addresses of welcome, freedom boxes, silverware and leatherwork, christmas cards and stage scenery, were all designed in the same fashion. In 1897, the Limerick Mayoral chair by Joe Lynch, also St. Eunan's Cathedral, Letterkenny, anthropomorphic (birdforms) and zoomorphic (beast forms ) interlace, At the National Museum, is a large-scale initial "R" by Peter O'Malley (1907)

A schism within the revival "movement" at the beginning of the new century produced a pan-european variant of the still flourishing tradition. The new experiment was a mixture of traditional "Celtic" ornament and Art Nouveau. Scot Archibald Knox

is the important figure here. The "Samhain " magazine carried a running motif; It was an Art-Nouveau/Traditionalist peacock. English wedge wood plates also used an art-nouveau traditionalist variant even before 1912.

1915, the Homan Chapel U.C.C. modern Irish romanesque. This Chapel, its wrought-iron door grille ( William A. Scott, its tapestries), (Evelyn Gleeson, its altar cards), Joe Tierney, its missal covers, Eleanor Kelly is probably the first to attempt to bring together all the strands of the traditionalist branch of the revival.

"The Book of Ballykinlar"(1920-1921) a prisoners autograph book illuminated by Micheal O' Riada, is kept in the national Museum.

O'Murnaghan's Book, " Leabhar na hAiseinige" was only 9½ pages old, when in 1928, there was a money problem. Only in 1934 was this solved and from 1943-1951 he finished 16 more pages.

Mass production and commercialism, and the end of illumination teaching in schools softened the edge of the revival from the 30's onwards. But an old exponent, Maureen Collins Ryan, of Limerick, is still alive and such as George Bain and Jum Fitzpatrick lead a new wave of interest.

The oratory of the Sacred Heart, Dominican Convent, Dun Laoghaire has examples of Sister Mary Concepta Lynch's own distinctive style of celtic art.

### CELTIC REVIVAL

Changes were also taking place in literature written in the English language. Most of the poetry up to this time had purely been imitation of English Models. Samuel Ferguson and James C. Mangan had based their poems on ancient Irish sources. At the end of the century there was a whole new body of Irish material. Many writers also drew, the most important of these was W.B. Yeats. Yeats was friendly with an old Fenian, John O'Leary. Because of this friendship, yeats became interested in the ancient legends of Ireland and the folk tales of the countryside.

Drama too, was influenced by these developments. In 1899, Yeats, Lady Gregory and others founded the Irish Literary Theatre, later known as the Abbey. Until this time the tradition of Drama was of little importance.

Sir. Frederick William Burton (1816-1900) was a very well known watercolourist and draughtsman, his best work was probably in portraiture. One well known picture of his called "the Aran Fisherman's Drowned Child" which can be seen in the National Gallery of Ireland, is a really well drawn picture.

Michael G. Brennan (1839-71) was an Irish cartoonist who worked for a London journal called "Fun", he was for some time a rival for another Irish artist, Richard Doyle (1824-83) who created the old cover of "Punch".

Mathew James Lawless (1837-64) was a brilliant oil painter, he illustrated lots of books and journals, too.

William Orpen (1878-1931) came from a well-to-do county Dublin family, who studied art in the Metropolitan School. His early drawings in landscapes in oil are light and free. His nudes, especially, are drawn with great understanding, his female portraits are usually more sympathetic than those of men. For a time, orpen was known as an official war artist, an amount of his drawings in France belong to the Imperial War Museum, London. He had a reputation for being a portrait painter, also his "A Bloomsbury Family" is an excellent painting. A large amount of his paintings include himself as seen in "The Model" He often included himself in portrait groups. Orpen studied in Slade for a time under a contemporary of Augustus John, his influence is seen in some of the paintings.

John Lavery (1856-1941) was born in Belfast and trained at art school in Glasgow. He worked as an official war artist, like Orpen, they were both Knighted in 1918.

Sarah Purser (1848-1943) was a central figure in art in Dublin, she was a good portrait painter. Some of her finest work was not strictly portraiture, for example "le Petit Dejeuner". Sarah Purser was involved in Irish stained glass at the turn of the century, designing stained glass, The real creative impulse

for the movement came from Harry Clarke (1889-1931) and Michael Healy (1873-1941). Clarke was a very distinctive artist who had great individuality. He was influenced by Beardsley. Michael Healy's vision was different to these too, his vision was a simple one, unsophisticated. They designed windows of churches and cathedrals throughout the country of Ireland. They were both excellent draughtsmen, Clarke is an excellent book illustrator. Healy a great watercolourist who chose Dublin figures as his subjects as well as street scenes.

The most sensitive Irish portrait painter is John Butler Yeats (1839-1922). Yeats started his life as an architect, two years after the birth of his eldest son he took up painting. He studied painting at Heatherleys Art School, his early influence could have been essentially English because his technique is something like that of George Frederick Watts. He was obviously influenced by the atmosphere of the Pre-Raphaelitism, although he soon found his own individual style. A large amount of his paintings were destroyed by bombing during the second world war.

Yeats was able to capture the essence of his models character, the eyes alone gave him this. The paintings of this period were almost always accompanied by drawings - some of them, for example, J.M. Synge - quite superb. Yeats kept on working right up to his death.

## CHAPTER 5.

This final chapter covers celtic motifs found in Contemporary design and their origins. It more specifically looks at contemporary art of George Bain. Having in last chapter looked at the development of celtic art through to today. This chapter now covers the existing form that celtic art now takes

It is obvious that this design is within a circle/spiral. The basic shape has been developed from the Chinese Yang-Yin which is also the same design found upon Irish stone-crosses.



1. chinese yang-yin

2. development of  
chinese yang-yin

3. inside

The Chinese Yang-Yin, developed from 1. to 2. Figure 2. has tangential rays which the effect of movement. Three coils (fig 3) are a very common characteristic of celtic design. Looking at these heads, one immediately sees a whirl, or effect of movement. The heads are typical of what are found in the Book of Kells, the hair being more woven. The curl at the nose is also common. The knotwork panel consists of one continuous line, which could be a symbol of eternity. The continuity is undoubtedly intensional. Today "The New Ireland " symbol (b) is a modern use for this idea. (c) The knotwork is used on plaiting, as J. Romilly Allen first discovered. The interlacing is carried over and under, alternatively.

The most niticeable part of this design is the continuous pathway in quadrangle. It is adapted from Michaelangelos design of the Capitol, Rome, from an engraving by Dun Perac in 1569. The irregular knotwork in each quadrangle is made up of a continuous line. The designer George Bain, has put a coat of arms or shield containing a "lion " in the centre. If one is observant, it will be discovered that the knotwork is completely different in each quadrangle. This knotwork, is adapted from the Book of Kells.

#### GREETING CARD:

This is the usual cross-shape found on high crosses throughout churches in Ireland. The knotwork is very tightly packed together. It is made up of one continuous line, which is a common celtic idea. The beginning and end of the line is a modern version of a base on a celtic cross. The border used to outline the basic shape is also unusual. The design is adapted from Groudle Stone, Isle of Man. The artist unknown.



New Ireland Assurance

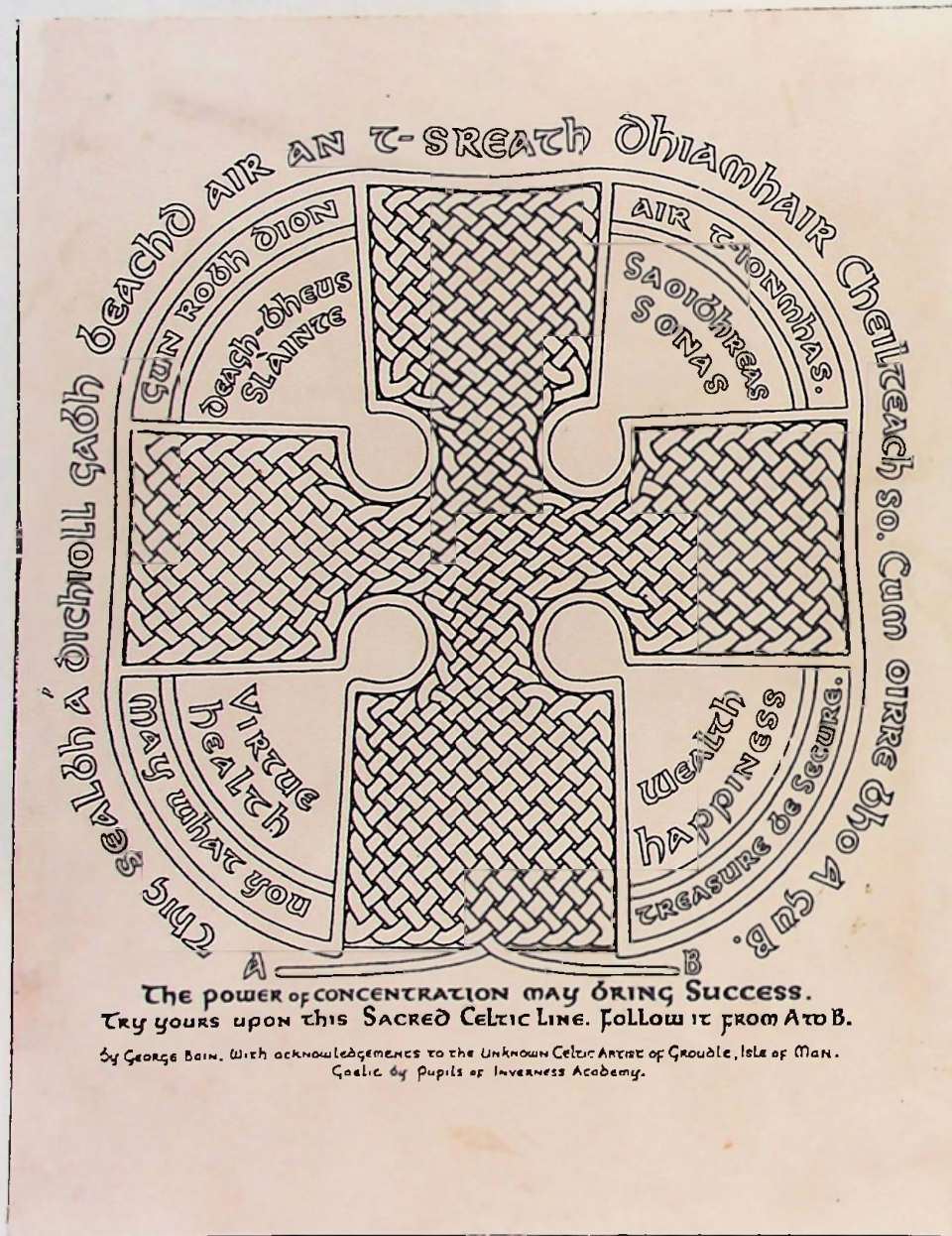


EXAMPLES OF MODERN YANG-YIN DESIGNS      Fig 1.

DESIGN NO: 2

DESIGN FOR " GREETING CARD "





DESIGN NO: 3

GREETING CARD ADAPTED FROM  
CROUNDLE STONE - ISLE OF MAN



Aberlemno Stone.

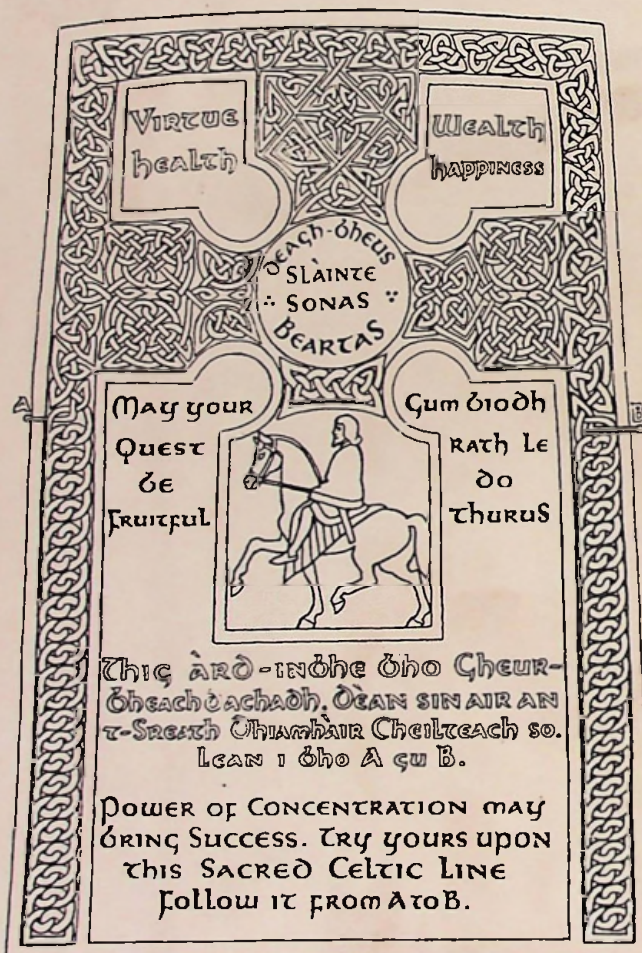


Fig 3a.

NO: 4

MODERN VERSION OF

" THE ROSSIE PRIORY STONE "



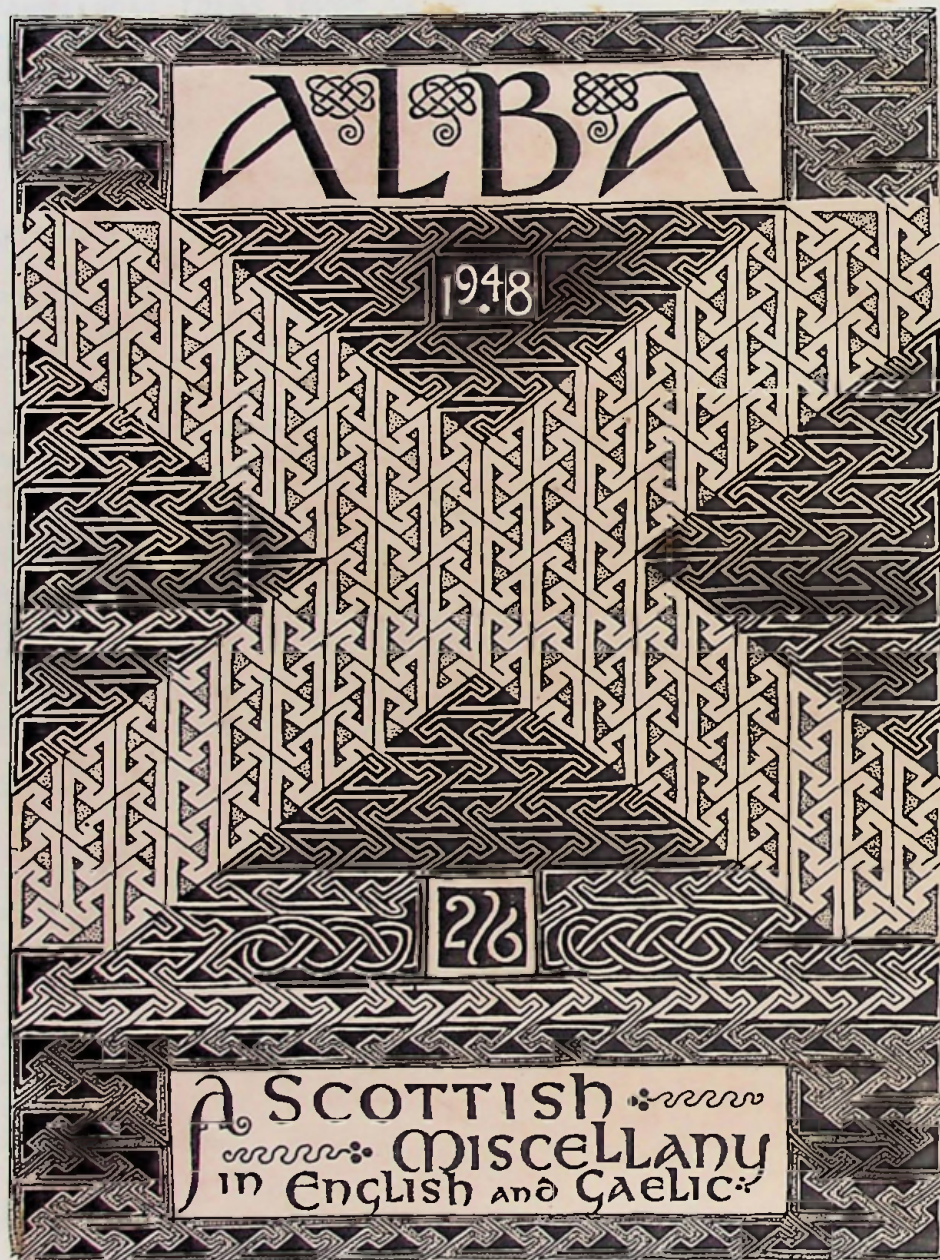
WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO THE UNKNOWN CELTIC ARTIST OF  
THE ROSSIE-PRIORY STONE. BY GEORGE BAIN, DRUMNADROCHIT.  
GAELIC BY PUPILS OF  
INVERNESS ACADEMY.

NO: 5



" DOORWAY DESIGN "

NEW YEAR GREETING CARD



## No.4.

This greeting card is adapted from the Rossie-Priory Stone. The artist is unknown. George Bain, designer has used the same basic interior and exterior stone shape, but he uses Gaelic lettering instead of the zoomorphic forms found on the original. In my opinion this works quite well. He uses two styles of border-like patterns which link up to form intricate all-over patterns. The A-B line is a very obvious here too. The method of construction is taken from the Rossie P. Stone.

## No.5.

"Doorway " design for New Year Greeting Card.

This design has made good use of bird motifs in interlacing ornaments. The two lines that form their necks are continuous, and develop into borders that form pillars on both sides of the doorway.

This idea is adapted from both "The Book of Kells" and "The book of Lindisfarne" from the gospels of Mac Regol and pictish stones. The designs on the birds wings are not uniform, neither are the neck designs. The panels on both sides of the base are exactly the same. They are probably a reversed tracing. The treatment of the birds eyes are typically celtic. Their body endings(arc) eventually form a circle, which is spiral-like. The tiny circles found on top of this band are very similar to those found floating round the garments of St. Luke or St. Mark in the Book of Kells, Lindisfarne and Mac Durnan.

Design for a Magazine Cover No.6.

This cover design is entirely made up of Key patterns, of minute detail and accuracy .

Examples of these patterns; see pages numbered (6)

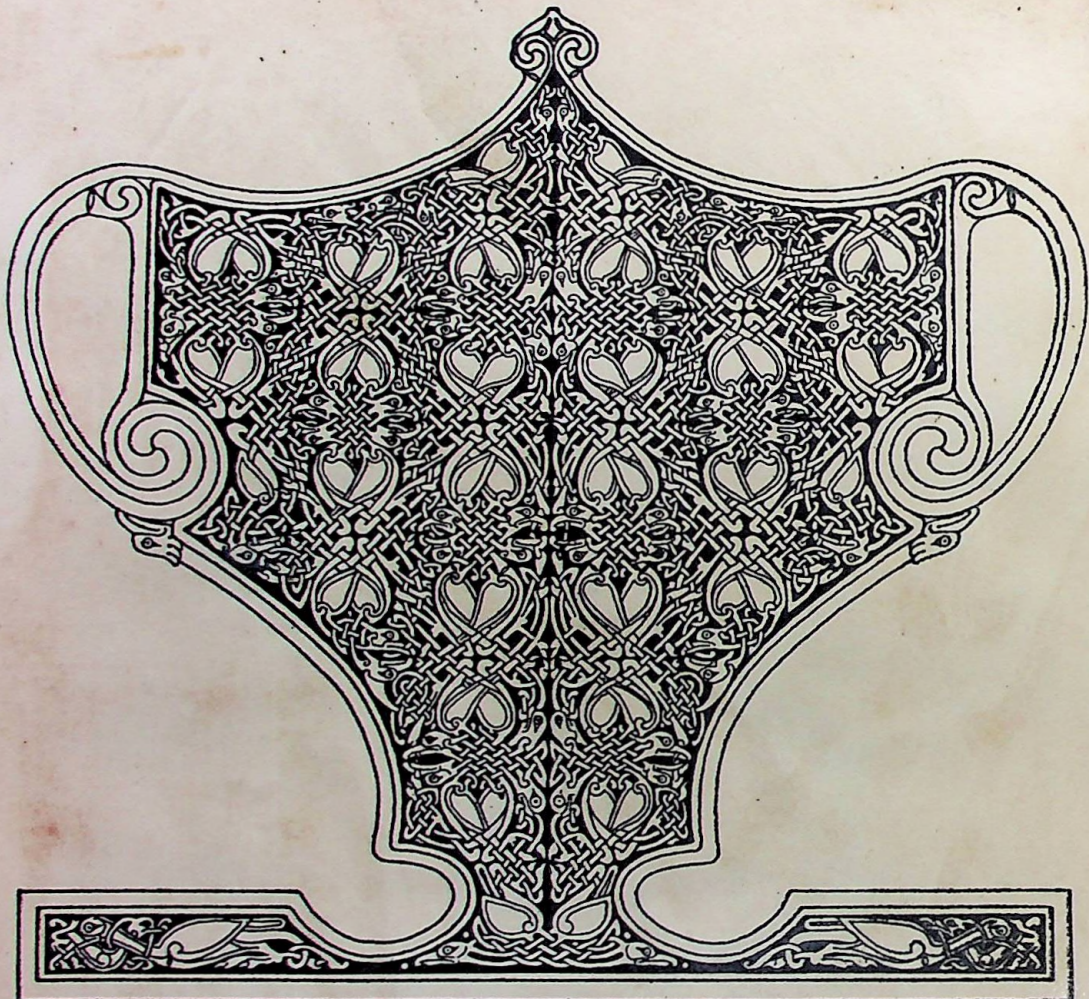
The X shape is made very obvious because the background key patterns are negative, although they are not all similar patterns.

The letters of the alphabet are typically celtic. The design on the top part of the "L", "B" and last "A" is found in the books of Durrow, Lindisfarne and Kells, but they usually develop into a zoomorphic form as seen in example ( 6 a )

Design for Greeting Card No.7.

The basic shape of this design is that of a chalice. The all-over pattern contains the "Birds of Friendship", from the Book of Lindisfarne. From the method of construction, one can see that the birds necks are very intricately woven together to form a knotwork panel. From the centre, it seems that the design could be halved, as if it were a mirror image. The base of the chalice is very nicely done, with the birds heads turning in different directions, and necks also forming a knotwork panel.

On both sides of the base of the handles are the famous yang-yin symbols, again. Underneath these, are birds heads whose necks very cleverly form the bottom shape of the chalice. At the very top is another pair of yang-yin symbols. "Gaelic Type ", also



Designed by George Bain, with acknowledgements to an unknown artist of the "Book of Lindisfarne"

Sum boidh fòin traìdh nan fàidheal  
fille ri dealòh do bheatha.

MAY THE BIRDS OF FRIENDSHIP OF THE GAEL BE EVER WOVEN INTO THE WEB OF YOUR LIFE.

Plate 11

Design for Greeting Card.

No. 7.

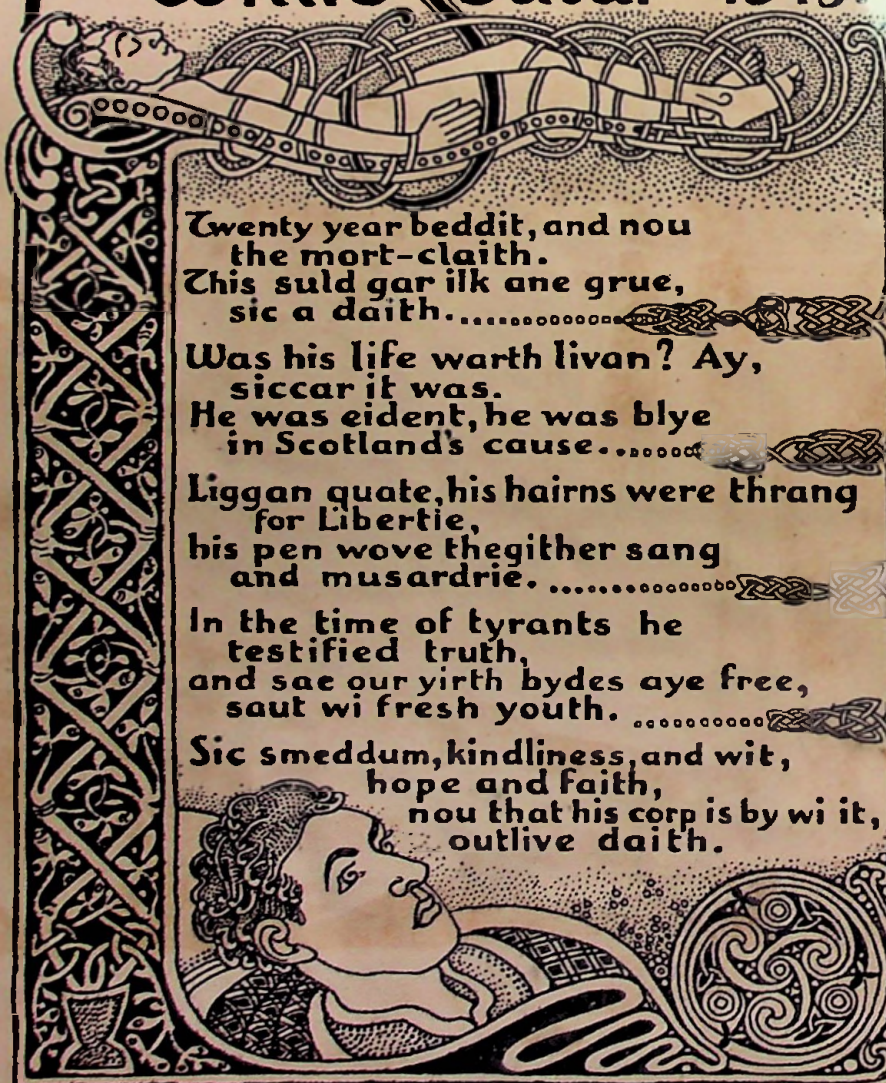


No. 8.

No. 9.



# For Willie Outar October 1943.



Twenty year beddit, and nou  
the mort-claith.  
This suld gar ilk ane grue,  
sic a daith.....

Was his life warth livan? Ay,  
siccar it was.  
He was eident, he was blye  
in Scotland's cause.....

Liggan quate, his hairns were thrang  
for Libertie,  
his pen wove thegither sang  
and musardrie. ....

In the time of tyrants he  
testified truth,  
and sae our yirth bydes aye free,  
saut wi fresh youth. ....

Sic smeddum, kindliness, and wit,  
hope and faith,  
nou that his corp is by wi it,  
outlive daith.

George Bain

Designed by the Author. Poem by Douglas Young

used, which is found in the Book of Kells, Durrow, and Lindisfarne

Design for Poem by Douglas Young;

"For Willie Souter " No. 9.

This design is made up of two areas. The top is made up of six semi-realistic human portraits, in the celtic fashion. Curly designs were used for hair, celtic knotwork was also used. The key patterned borders sound figures heads are found in Book of Kells, Lindisfarne and Mac Durnan. This is very common in modern celtic design.

The space in between the two different areas, holds the name of the poem. It is very obvious that the top of the "S" is the centre part of the key patterned border and also that it forms the three coils of the yang-yin.

The dead man is as it were being held in the air, by the system of continuous line. This continuous line eventually goes up and around to form a loop and goes back down again to form four very small borders, and still in a continuous line it is seen to develop into an all-over spiral pattern. On the left hand side is an unusual border - a foliage-like pattern that criss-crosses until eventually at the base, it enters a vase. On top it develops into the continuous line that is holding the dead man up. This border is originally from "The Tree of Life " which is found in the Book of Kells, Pictish Stones, and Asiatic Sources. The portrait of the person on the very end of the poem is very unceltic-like. The type of face used is semi-celtic like. Note the long flowing hair.

This idea is made up of modern celtic versions. The shape at the top is made up of the usual celtic knotwork of Book of Durrow, used with dots to fill up the background. The knotwork eventually comes downwards, and forms as it were, a plait of hair on both heads. From the front of both heads of hair, there is a slight border-like pattern. Their arms and hands continue to form the celtic pattern by pulling each other's beards and interweaving them. Their trousers are made up of horizontal borders. They give an illusion of tartan or tweed material. At the base are the yang-yin designs which eventually form the three circles in an equilateral triangle, which is the symbol of sanctity.

On both sides of the legs are a type of, either butterfly or very decorated moth. It is not common to find this type of insect in celtic manuscripts.

The thorn-like foliage on which the two figures are seated is also very uncommon in manuscripts. It is a little bit too harsh, for the delicacy of normal celtic design. Notice the three circles forming an equilateral triangle, adorning the garments, sacred books, and haloes of saints and angels.

No. 8.

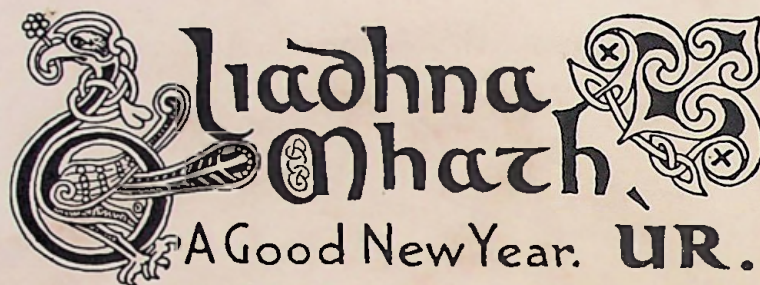
This design, is, in my opinion, very beautiful. It is complicated and very intricate looking, yet very delicate. The bodies form the letter "C" and the right one is reversed. The plaited beard is very delicately woven together, one is immediately tempted to trace it to the end. Their hair is intelligently woven together to create a pattern round both of their backs. At the base, the hair weaves round and through their hands.

The body shapes are very elegantly drawn, their legs and feet are very sophisticated and are based on those of the Book of Kells, Lindisfarne, and Mac Durnan. At the joints are to be seen the usual celtic knot which is very cleverly used. They are inside this loaf shaped tunnel with room to move round. The use of a maze pattern is seen round the edges.

No. 10. This design is often mistaken to be a man playing a harp what it is, in fact, is a man, a beast, a bird and perhaps a reptile, all entangles. The idea of the man's legs being interwoven through the beast's is originally from the Book of Kells and/or of the Book of Lindisfarne, also seen on the stone at Clonmacnois. The man's body is elongated which is also common in the areas above mentioned, and the fact that the beard forms a continuous line that is looped in certain areas (ex. p.115). A modern example of this being used is the "Fergus O'Farrell" symbol - also shown - which he uses for his craftshops. This symbol, consists of three men forming a circle. Notice that the beard and hair also form designs, which is also made up from a continuous line. A third example of this idea is a reconstruction from a rubbing of the cross-shaft at Clonmacnois, on these forms are known as "Beard pullers"

"New Year Greeting Card" design No. 11.

This is made up from an ornamented celtic letter "B" taken straight from the Book of Kells. George Bain, uses a Gaelic type face to complement the design. From the letter "H" there is a modern version of a celtic design, within this there is a pair of yang-yin, above these are two similar ideas but they do not contain a third spiral.



Initial B from Book of Kells. Adapted by George Bain.

No. 11.



No. 10.

Plate XIX Studio Publication  
Actual height  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch.

The four symbols of the Evangelists, a page from The Book of Kells. It was written by Femdominach at the dictation of Abbot Torbach, who died on the 16th July, 808.

The evangelist symbols are the Vulgate Symbols, the Angel for Mathew, the lion for Mark, the Ox for Luke, the eagle for John.

The contemporary version (Card) is in more abstract form. It does not contain the detail or the intricatness of the original, although it is an excellent design. The designer, who is David Lance Goines has changed the colour completely. The original is made up of extremely cold colours, actually this post-card is very deceiving, the colour is more vivid. In the original from "The Book of Kells " there is an all-over colour of purple-blue and borders of yellow

The "Bach " card is cold coloured, too but it is very effective, it is interesting to see the use of the yang-yin symbol in the bottom right hand corner of the eagle, (John ) in this card.



BOOK OF KELLS, fol. 27v.  
The Symbols of the Four Evangelists  
St. Matthew's Gospel.



Fig 13.

A contemporary version  
of the Evangelists,  
from Book of Kells.

# Greetings from Ireland

Typical celtic interweaving but the colours are very contemporary  
vivid colours.  
The outline which is at times broken is not used in the manuscripts  
either.



FIG 14

Jim Fitzpatrick in his poster design of "Dearmuid and Grainne" it is seen how he uses celtic designs but makes them much more abstract than they usually are. The real recognisable celtic image in this case, is on Grainne's dress which is an animal of some sort. It's body is winding round and round, which is typical of celtic design.

Fitzpatrick uses old Irish type faces which add to the all-over look of it being celtic.

Fig 15.



### Conclusion;

By doing this thesis on "Ancient Celtic Design" a greater appreciation and understanding of the beautiful, intricate designs has developed.

By researching, a great knowledge of the historical background has been achieved, and a stronger desire to create contemporary celtic designs.

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By LADY WILDE

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