

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN

A Survey of Irish Letterforms from the Christian Manuscripts to the present day.  
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## INTRODUCTION:

In this thesis I propose to take a critical look at the Gaelic type-face Colum Cille, at both design stage and as it appeared in its finished form in 1935. Colum Cille is important because its creator Colm O'Lochlainn, as both printer and designer, was aware of the deficiencies of the preceding Gaelic type in modern book production.

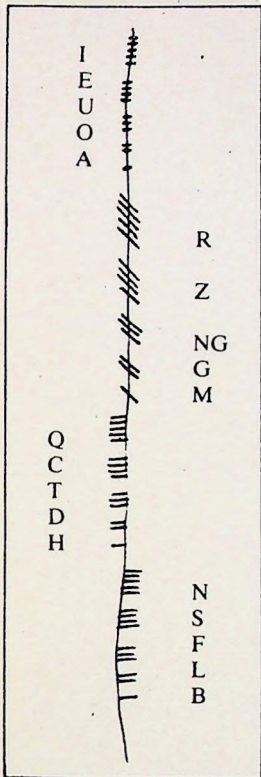
For example, the Gaelic faces available to printers in the first quarter of this century had no italic form, which is always valuable for emphasis. Neither were condensed or expanded faces available. Even as they stood the Gaelic faces were short of small capitals, reference marks and fractions. This led O'Lochlainn to the belief that it was easier to produce a beautiful book in Roman letter than in Gaelic.

Colum Cille can be seen then as an attempt to correct some of these shortcomings and at the same time create an aesthetically pleasing and practical design.

In order to adequately appreciate the formal qualities of Colum Cille I think it necessary to trace the history of Gaelic letterforms back to the various hands which appear in the early Christian manuscripts. From there I will examine their transformation as they were adapted for printing taking into consideration the Irish 'mission' on the continent and the technology involved in the printing process.

After the discussion of Colum Cille I will conclude with a short survey of Irish in print since then, including an assessment of the appearance of Irish in the Roman alphabet.

CO CORK



R  
Z  
N  
G  
M

Q  
C  
T  
D  
H

N  
S  
F  
L  
B

GREEN HILL



## PART I.

### IRISH SCRIPT FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES UNTIL THE INVENTION OF PRINTING.

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Although the written literature of Ireland begins with the arrival of the Christians and evolves under their patronage an earlier form of linear script existed in Pre-Christian times. It is worth mentioning if only to emphasise the fact that the Christians were not the first to introduce written communication into Ireland.

The script was called Ogam<sup>1</sup> or Ogham. It has been found on over 300 stones dating from the fourth to the fifth century. This may seem to concur with the establishment of the Church in Ireland but the origins of Ogam can be traced back into the mythology of the Celts. Although Ogam was alphabeticised under the influence of Latin it was not alphabetical by nature and could not as Mac Neill says "have served the purposes of ordinary literature".

St. Patrick is traditionally credited with introducing the Irish to the "language and the common script of Rome". As he was the founder and the most influential force in the early Christian Church in Ireland it seems likely that he would have shown his converts the patristic texts which he collected from Pope Celestine (422-32). These texts were principally written in half-uncial. Furthermore it is worth noting that most of the words connected with writing in the Irish language are of Latin origin, for example leabhar-liber, scriobh-scribo, focal-vocabulum and so on.

The Gaelic alphabet used in writing and printing is derived from the Roman (Latin) manuscript letters. The only letters markedly different from the Roman are a, d, f, g, r, s and t. The alphabet is made up of 18 letters in all j, k, q, v, w, x, y, and z not being used. However, the consonants b, c, d, g, f, m, p, s, and t have an additional mutated sound signified by a dot placed

Ecce uelut tempus cismest in  
duas partes assummusq. de consi,

2

Irish majuscule, Book of Durrow,  
7th century.

De ordine scripturarum. de ecclesia. de eunonibus. de officio. de  
de deo. de angelis. de animis. de praeiudiciis. de angelis. de scriptura. de amara. de belandis.  
Conuictis. de ecclesia. de fidelium. de nuntiis. de illis. de ecclesia. de sinagoga.

3

Visigothic script,  
9th or 10th century.

car linnio qo eustis qonif q adluator & coopeta  
cor exagat. ac mulas iustitias; mifericordia;

4

Beneventan script,  
c. 1087.

nomis & pastor. Ad quidem quassipant par  
topi gregem miam. salpicebunt. pastores

5

Merovingian script,  
Luxeuil type, 7th-8th century.

miserere, Ite in quibus & xpianis si reliquos tunc id qre  
tem quicquid in se mris re hie hie monia se uis qe lade ipis sine

Merovingian  
script, "ab-type" Corbie,  
8th century.

INTELLECTUS SIUE COGITATIONES. XVII.

**A**licubi dñs de nobis. inhabitabo in ipsis &  
in ambulo. & ero ipsis dñs. & ipsi erunt mihi  
populus. nec non etiam ipse dñs nñr ihñs xpc.  
ecce ego uenio. & si quis mihi aperuerit. intra.  
bo & ego & pater. & mansionem apud ipsū  
faciemus. & apud eum cœnabimur; nominati

6

Carolingian minuscule, second half of  
the 9th century.



over the letter. This is derived from the 'punctum delens' used by the early scribes to indicate a missing letter. The longer sound of each vowel is indicated by an acute accent.

The Gaelic alphabet, as it appeared right up until the mid 1950's, evolved from the Latin manuscripts produced by Saint Colmcille and his monks in the monasteries of Kells, Durrow<sup>2</sup> and Iona. Basically the alphabet which they developed was a regional style of the Roman manuscript half-uncial letters. This was only one of the many regional or national scripts in use by the early middle ages. These included the Visigothic script<sup>3</sup> of Spain, the Beneventan script<sup>4</sup> of Southern Italy and the local types of the Merovingian<sup>5</sup> Kingdom.

All these scripts can be seen as an attempt to normalise the degenerative cursive scripts of late antiquity in the hope of thus producing a practical book hand. The Irish script had the longest life and the widest dissemination of all the national scripts and survived long after the others had given way to the qualities of the Carolingian miniscule<sup>6</sup>. This Carolingian script was an eclectic form as it was created out of elements contained in several scripts which the missionaries had brought with them. It contains elements from the two distinct types of script which the Irish scribes used side by side; the majuscule or 'round hand' and the miniscule or 'pointed hand'. The Irish language appears first in its written form as glosses (notes to the main Latin text) in the miniscule script, which can be seen in the columns of manuscripts such as those at Würzburg, Saint Gall and Milan.

#### MAJUSCULE AND MINISCULE:

Majuscule is the term given to a script that contains letters of much the same height. The ascending lines such as in b, d, and h and descending lines such as in p and q are usually short, causing the script to move along between two parallel lines.

AN... 1080...  
**I**am bonum in aeternum est his qui in aeternum  
mea autem penemouit me peder  
Pene effusi sunt gressus mei  
quia exauis super iniquis  
Propter peccatorum uident  
non est neque spectus mortuorum  
Suum inuentum in placet eorum



In the miniscule script the ascenders and decenders are longer so the writing is seen to move along four parallel lines, the two centre lines being the top and bottom of the minim stroke (basic stroke of m and n.)

This is a simple way of distinguishing each script when both are in their purist form. Within each script though, there are as many variations as there are hands to put them down. The character height relative to nib-thickness varies from hand to hand as does the angle at which each scribe holds his quill. These factors can radically alter the appearance of a script. In the categorization of scripts paleographers find numerous shadings caused by the degree of care taken by a scribe. There are a number of terms to describe the move from slow or 'formal' hand to the 'speedy' or 'cursive' hand. The difference between script and hand is summed up by one paleographer as follows:

"A script is the model which a scribe has in his minds eye when he writes, whereas a hand is what he actually puts on the page"

In some quarters the Irish scribes of the seventh century are considered the most ingenious in all the West due to their contribution to the half-uncial and the degree of perfection contained in their work has been described as 'unequalled'. Opinions such as these are open for debate but there can be no doubt that the letters made in these manuscripts were used as models for the full Roman alphabet to follow. The Irish influence can be seen in the Carolingian hand which the Humanists used in turn as a model for their Roman. However, of more significance for the present study is the profound effect which the Irish scribes' treatment of the half-uncial had on the 18 characters used in the Irish language.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IRISH BOOK HAND:

The script which is known alternatively as insular Majuscule, Irish round-hand and Irish half-uncial appears in its earliest known form in the Cathach<sup>7</sup>. It is a psalter dating from the second half of the sixth century. It was written in Ireland and

and is traditionally regarded as being the autograph of St. Colum Cille. 'Cathach' is translated as 'champion' or 'battler'; a name it got from being carried into battle by its 15th. century chieftan owner Cearrbath O'Donnell.

The illustration shows us how the half-uncial letters are rounded out in the hands of the Irish scribes most noticeable in the base of b, d, and l. Generally the strokes have become thicker.

The most distinctive feature of the script is the triangular wedge serif which adorns the stroke terminals of the perpendiculars, whether they ascend or not. This was to remain a standard lineament of the script in the following centuries, even in less formal writing. Here it appears flat on top, as the quill was held in an upright position. This also causes the downstrokes to be thick and the horizontals relatively slender by comparison.

The negligible word spacing gives rise to poor legibility. This is accentuated by the short descenders making it difficult to see that f, g, p and q come below the base-line.

Another feature of the script, that was to remain in the manuscripts to follow and in the writing and printing of Irish is the flat headed 'g'. It appears in the third line from the top in the illustration<sup>7</sup>. The only departure from the norm is the r which does not descend Morison says of the script:-

'The script of the Cathach is a rapid unstudied transcription of a familiar text perhaps written from memory for individual use'

The nature of the script is such that it is not conducive to speedy writing and as the writer was in great haste he occasionally falls into cursive and flourishes as he sees fit. Writing with a wedge serif must have been inconvenient but, as it was deemed necessary for all kinds of writing, it saved the cursive script from degenerating as otherwise might have happened and determined the form of Irish miniscule.



ante cedebat eos

**Q**uod propinquavit ihu ut oscula  
petere eum. **I**hs autem torcens illi

iuda osculo plenum hominis erat

**V**identes autem hi qui erant ipsum  
erant quod putatum erat dixeru

nt ei dñe si vis percutimus in gutto

percutit unius oculis servum princi

pis sacerdotum **C**um putavit aricu

lam eius dextram respondens autē

ih̄s ait eis sinite usque huc

**C**um tēgisset ariculam eius

salvavit eum

**Q**uod autem ih̄s ad eos qui que

rant aose principes sacerdo

tum **A**ntagistratus templi **A**senio



Insular majuscule can be seen at its most formal and dignified in the Book of Kells.<sup>8</sup> From features in its decoration it has been dated as late eighth or early ninth century. It took many years to complete and was far from completion when the scriptorium of Iona was dispersed by the Vikings. The fleeing monks took the unfinished manuscript to Kells where it was completed. Four different hands have been detected throughout the book.

The writing, as in the Cathach is not always legible. Words are often imperfectly separated and there are numerous misspellings. However, the layout of the page is more regular and imposing. There is more of a distinction between the letter forms due to the ascenders and descenders being a bit more obvious. Generally, the letters are more open and rounded making the lines appear lighter in colour.

The triangular wedge serifs have become heavier and more deliberate than in the Cathach. Besides the ascenders, the m and n lead-in with a finely wrought wedge. This feature will appear again in the discussion of Petrie's type and Colum Cille.

The wedge serif has caused much speculation among paleographers. As they can not find any anticipation of it in western calligraphy they are not sure whether the Irish can be credited with its origination and not merely with its propagation.

If the continental manuscripts fail to indicate a point of origin for the wedge serif a study of the coins of ancient Rome and Byzantium proves more fruitful. However, it is not necessary to analyse the coins in depth here. Suffice to say that the most valued artefacts at the time were produced in Byzantium or by Byzantine artists working in Rome. It is possible therefore that when the scribes were developing their insular majuscule, they were impressed enough to use the serifs from the Byzantine coins. This is speculative but not beyond the realms of possibility, because a manuscript such as the Book of Kells owes much to Byzantine decoration and colouring.



Inducer plantaseor in montem bene  
 dictatitiae in pnae panata habi  
 tationis tuae. Quod pnae panata  
 clne scimonum tuum clne quod  
 pnae panauenerunt in anstiae.  
 Pie tanegias in aeternum & in sae  
 culum saeculi & adhuc quoniam  
 Intrauit aequitatur paraomy  
 cum cunibus & ascensionibus in  
 mare & induxit dñr super eos  
 aequas in anis filius israhel. habi  
 enunt per sicum per medium  
 benedictio pñe <sup>in mare</sup> ~~corum~~  
**B**enedicite omnia op<sup>er</sup>a dñi  
 clñm s. in unum dñe & super  
 exaltate eum in saecula  
 & caeli dñi dñon s. in unum

qua ipse nescit unde ob  
 nuatur pñe potius ad on  
 andum in tñtius pñe  
 tun. ut ad nos dñe pñe  
 pñe tranquidatum pñe  
 in te pñe culum.

De conmaco  
 No quoque in tñpne  
 de conmaccone

By the ninth century, insular majuscule had lost its popularity mainly because it was expensive in terms of time and parchment. Insular miniscule which was to succeed it had developed collaterally as mentioned above. The earliest known manuscript written in this style is the Antiphonary of Bangor<sup>9</sup> which dates from 680-691, a century after the Cathach. It was a collection made at Bangor of hymns, prayers and various other pieces. In it Irish miniscule is represented in a wide variety. Any half-uncial majuscule that there is, appears only in rubrics (Chapter headings and instructions).

The book was completed during the abbacy of Colman and represents the work of about twenty men. The Bangor miniscule is large in scale and varies greatly in speed of execution. By inclining the quill slightly to the right the scribe has narrowed the body of his letters thus saving space. This invention anticipates the continental miniscule of St. Gall and Reichenau by about four centuries.

Some of the letter forms vary from line to line. The d sometimes has a vertical main stroke and elsewhere is swung over to the left as in the Cathach and the Book of Kells. The a is at times single bodied and occasionally approximates the Greek Alpha.

The large scale script employed here, exhibits many of the qualities that were later canonised in the small scale economical transcriptions of the Gospel texts known as 'pocket Gospel books'. The Book of Armagh belongs to this category and will be dealt with shortly.

The best miniscule hand of the period was written before 713 by Dorbene prior of Iona in his version of Adamnán's 'Life of St. Columba'.<sup>10</sup> It is more formal than the Bangor hand, the pen being held in an upright position. The diagonal axis of c, o, and e indicate the slight slant. The d appears again in both vertical and round forms.

The Irish scribes can therefore be credited with the invention of miniscule. Even though the Bangor hands are very cursive, the scribes separate their letters more carefully than the scribes of the continent a generation later.



11 **H**ic **P**olupia nris nobis regibet  
 nolui per charitatem ad quendam  
 pro summe p uerum quid uos roscad  
 os loqui ut. Audiamus p hui  
 p saluare de fili  
 sonoris tuas elatus  
 Hic p d an  
 e. d.

11 **P**ropter caritatem qd  
 dilgo inuitat auris me  
 p h omnia opco de b h p  
 legi p. Aluum de omnibz  
 1111  
 opationan p ago p p p ing  
 p ali qualis p p p p ago  
 anima tua caritatis ammal  
 de uisibilibz p p p p p p  
 num p p p p p p p p p p  
 11  
 tu inuitat ambulat orator  
 in h p p p p p p p p p p

12 **Tu as**

# THE BOOK OF ARMAGH:<sup>11</sup>

is the only complete New Testament which has survived from early Christian Ireland. A section of the book can be dated from 807-8. One of the calophons indicate that the book was written by Ferdomnach under the direction of Torbach 'successor of Patrick' Abbot of Armagh. He wrote the text in insular miniscule.

Francoise Henry ranks Ferdannach as one of the finest scribes whose work has come down to us. She describes his handling of the script as follows;

"He handles the miniscule script .... with incredible virtuosity giving it a sort of regular rhythmic appearance and suddenly extracting from it the melody of great curves sweeping across the page'.

I have picked the word 'tuae'<sup>12</sup> from the text to illustrate her point. The cross bar of the 't' is a sweeping curve leading into the word. The finishing stroke to the 'e' is also exaggerated.

If we take a look at certain letters as they appear in the Book of Kells and the Book of Armagh, the appearances between insular majuscule and insular miniscule becomes more apparent.

In the illustration the letters a,d,f,g,m,s,r, and t<sup>13</sup> from the Book of Kells are shown with their equivalents from the Book of Armagh.

One of the most immediate differences is the angle at which the lettering is tilted. The majuscule letters have a slight bias towards the left whereas the miniscule forms are obviously tilted to the right. Insular miniscule is more cursive even when written formally so the quill is held in a more convenient diagonal position. This causes a to be more angular and the cross strokes of f,g, and t to be much thicker than their equivalents in the Book of Kells.



Book of Kells  
l m r s t

Book of Armagh  
l m p r t

a d f t

a d f t

Generally the script in the Book of Armagh appears to have been written more speedily. The scribe does not close off the bottom of g. He does however, extend it way below the base-line of the minim stroke. Similarly 'd' and 'l' ascend more obviously than in the majuscule.

The wedge serif is angled in the miniscule, again due to the position of the quill. It is less pronounced than in the Book of Kells, almost bracketed. Here too most of the strokes taper towards the end, as can be seen in the main strokes of f and m.

The two letters which have the least resemblance to their respective forms in both scripts are r and s. In the Book of Kells they appear in their uncial form. If r had appeared in its half-uncial form, it might have been confused with n, not having the benefit of the long descender given to it in the Book of Armagh. S is also written in its long form in the insular miniscule. As we shall see later the long miniscule forms of r and s were retained when the Irish alphabet was cut for printing purposes and remained in use until the twentieth century.

The Irish script continued to be practiced at home until the Anglo-Norman invasion in the twelfth century. Even when the conquerors adopted the late Romanesque and Gothic hands, the Irish script continued in use for writing the Irish language.

From Iona these scripts were imported to Northumbria and eventually found their way to the continent. Together the Irish and Anglo-Saxon scholars crossed the Channel and continued to write the script they had learnt at home. This is proven by the insular hands written abroad such as the Cuthbercht Gospels written in Salzburg.

Many of the Irish scholars brought manuscripts with them giving rise to libraries at the Irish centres on the continent. For example scholars from Bangor established a monastery at Bobbio in Northern Italy. Close contact was kept with Bangor so it is no surprise that two ancient Bangor manuscripts find their way to Bobbio at an early date. These were the Antiphonary already mentioned and a commentary on the Psalms with old Irish glosses.



[illegible][illegible]

Western Europe was dotted with monasteries whose origin directly or indirectly went back to Irish missionaries or pilgrims, Lagny, Luxeuil, St. Gall, Echternach and Würzburg. Most of these kept in contact with their mother country and Northumbria, as the most usual way from the North of Ireland to Europe was down through the north of England.

As early as the middle of the 8th. century a St. Gall scribe attempted to copy Irish miniscule. However, it was not until the middle of the ninth century that St. Gall became one of the main Irish centres on the continent. Bieler thinks that around this time Dorbbenes copy of Adamnans Life of St. Columba arrived in the Reichenau district. The monasteries role as mediator between Ireland and the continent is affirmed by the manuscripts in the Stiftsbibliothek in St. Gall. The most important of these being fragments from an Irish liturgy and a copy of the Latin Grammer of St. Priscan<sup>14</sup> with Irish Glosses. As can be seen from the illustration the miniscule hand of the grammer is similar to Dorbbenes hand used in the Life of St. Columba.<sup>10</sup> The letters are upright and have similar terminals. The last letter in some words is given a pronounced flick although not as prominent as in Dorbbenes hand. Here too there is an abundance of inter-linear and margin glosses.

The wealth of Irish manuscripts on the continent must have had a bearing on the appearance of the Irish language when it came to be printed in the 17th. century at Louvain and other Irish centres. Although the Irish insular hands directly influenced the Gaelic types some scholars wonder why the Irish forms were not used directly as models when the first books were printed. The main reason for this is that the insular scripts were no longer in use. By 1450 the common manuscript hand was the Black Letter<sup>15</sup> and in their attempts to make the printed book a facsimile of the written manuscripts the printers used this hand as a basis for their types. The Black Letter and Roman<sup>16</sup> were both indirectly influenced by the insular hands because both originated in various forms of Carolingian miniscule.

*Q*uo ad hunc effectum arguitur  
ut ueritatem filii admi  
nistraremur: p'dane pa

Carolingian pre-Gothic miniscule, 12th century.



Quod cū audisset dauid: descendit in  
 presidium. Philistim autem uenientes  
 diffusi sunt in ualle raphaim. Et cō-  
 suluic dauid dñm dicens. Si ascēdā  
 ad philistim. et si dabis eos ī manu  
 mea: Et dixit dñs ad dauid. Ascend:  
 q̄a tradens dabo philistim in manu  
 tua. Venit ergo dauid ad baalphara-  
 sim: et percussit eos ibi et dixit. Diuisit  
 dñs inimicos meos corā me: sicut di-  
 uidunt aquę. Propterea uocatū ē nō-  
 men loci illi? baalpharasim. Et reliq̄-  
 runt ibi sculptilia sua: q̄ culit dauid et  
 uiri ei⁹. Et addiderunt adhuc philisti-  
 im ut ascenderent: et diffusi sūt ī ualle  
 raphaim. Cōsuluic autē dauid dñm.  
 Si ascēdā cōtra philisteos: ⁊ tradas  
 eos in manus meas: Qui rōdit. Nō  
 ascendas cōtra eos sed gira post tergū  
 eorū: ⁊ uenies ad eos tradūso p̄iorū.  
 Et cū audieris sonitū clamoris gra-

Part of a column of the 42-line Bible (1r Sam. 5:17-24),  
 printed by Gutenberg in Mainz, 1452-6

P. VIRGILII MARONIS BVCOLICA.  
 AEGLOGA PRIMA: INTERLOCVTORES  
 MELIBOEVS ET TITYRVS AMICI. ME.

ITYRE TV PATVLAE RECV  
 BANS SVB TEGMINE FAGI  
 Siluestrē tenui mulsā meditaris auena.  
 Nos p̄iā fines: & dulcia liq̄mus arua.  
 Nos p̄iā fugius: tu Tityre lētus ī ūbra  
 F ornosam resonare doces amaryllida siluas. TI.  
 O melibœe deus nobis hæc ociā fecit.  
 N anq̄ erit ille mihi semper deus: illius aram  
 S æpe tener nostris ab ouilibus imbuet agnus.  
 I lle meas errare boues (ut cernis) & ipsum  
 L udere quæ uellem calamo permisit agresti. ME.  
 N on equidem inuideo: miror magis: undiq̄ totis  
 V sq̄ adeo turbatur agris: en ipse capellas  
 P rotinus ager ago: hanc etiam uix Tityre duco.  
 H ic inter densas corylos modo nanq̄ gemellos.  
 S pem gregis ah silice ī nuda cōnixa reliquit.  
 S æpe malum hoc nobis: si mens non leua fuisset:  
 D e cælo tactas memini prædicere quercus.  
 S ed tamen iste deus quis sit da Tityre nobis. TI.  
 V rbem quam dicunt romam Melibœe putauī  
 S cultus ego huic nostræ similē: quo sæpe solemus  
 P astores ouium teneros depellere fœtus.  
 S ic canibus catulos similes: sic matribus hædos  
 N oram: sic paruis componere magna solebam.  
 V erū hæc tantum alias inter caput extulit urbes:  
 Q uatū lenta solent inter uiburna cupressi. ME.  
 E r quæ tanta fuit romam tibi cā uidendi? TI.  
 L ibertas quæ fera tamen respexit inertem  
 C andidior: postq̄ tondenti barba cadebat.  
 R espexit tamen: & longo post tēpore uenit.

Virgil, *Bucolica*. printed by Nicolas Jenson in Venice, 1475

Stanley Morison gives a plausible reason for Irish hands not being used as models in the first printing type. The main reason that black letter was adopted by the first printers was because it was a condensed face, therefore saved valuable space when parchment and paper was so expensive. If the Irish had condensed laterally the script of the Book of Kells they might have anticipated the continental calligraphic experience by 400 years. The Irish scribes understood that a broad script like the continental half-uncial could be improved by narrowing the body and sharpening the stroke as seen in the 8th. century. Stowe Missal. Unfortunately, the principle of saving space by condensation was not established.

'The opportunity to contrive an economical condensed, black, serified, half-uncial was missed. Thus the Irish failed to anticipate the Black-Letter'



## PART 2.

### THE INVENTION OF PRINTING. PRINTING IN IRISH IN IRELAND AND ON THE CONTINENT UNTIL THE 19th. CENTURY. DEVELOPMENTS IN PRINTING TECHNOLOGY IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19th. CENTURY.

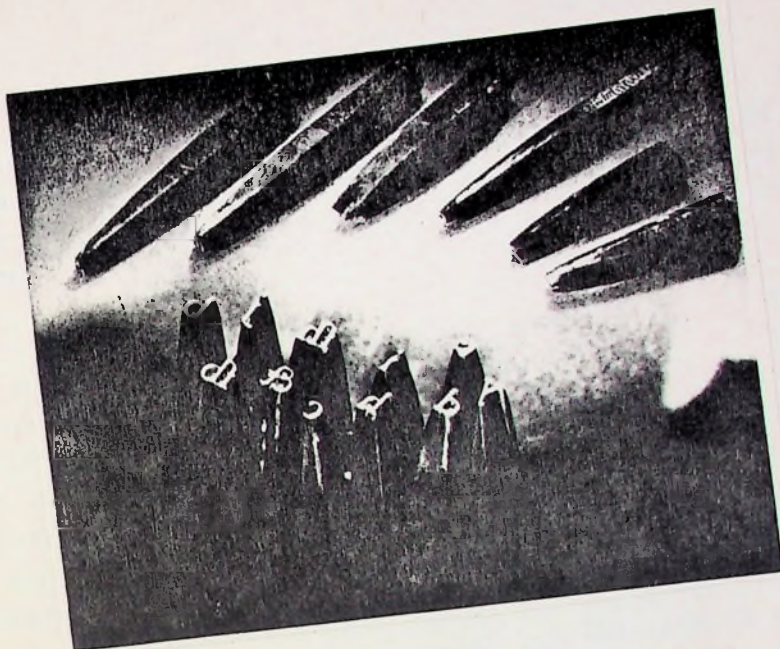
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Printing was not introduced into Ireland until the middle of the 16th. century almost a hundred years after Gutenberg had established his printing press at Mainz and some seventy-four years after Caxton had begun printing in Westminster. There have been various reasons forwarded for such a late arrival of printing such as foreign invasion and occupation, poverty, internal conflict and the decline of the once famous native schools. P.J. Lennox considers the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland accountable for 'keeping the country from sharing in the advancing civilisation of the times'. That a printing press was set up even then would be the cause of some surprise if its establishment is seen as something divorced from political and religious pressure. It seems that the first printing press was set up due to the party of the ascendancy's desire to spread the teaching of the reformed church rather than to any enthusiasm on the part of the people for the new art.

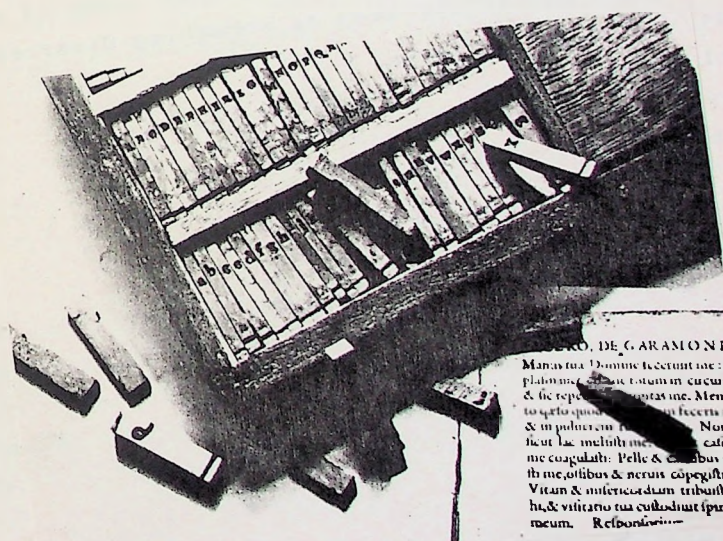
As we will see in the centuries that followed, the people in control of the presses whether in Ireland or Irish publishers on the continent regarded religious instruction as the chief need of the people. The religious conflict in Ireland also contributed, as Lynam says, in keeping 'printing in the Irish language active.'

Before I discuss the printing of Irish it is necessary to take one step back to consider Gutenberg's invention of movable type.

Johann Genifeisch Von Gutenberg, a Mainz Goldsmith, began experimenting with printing work towards 1440. By 1450 he had perfected his invention far enough to make it commercially viable.



17



DE GARAMOND  
Manus tua Domine fecerunt me: &  
platum meum: & tuum in cucuta,  
& sic reperi me in manus tue. Memé-  
to queto quoniam tu feceris me  
& in pulvis, in cinere. Nonne  
sicut lac inclisti me: & sicut  
me coagulasti. Pelle & carnibus vesti-  
sti me, ossibus & nervis coepigisti me.  
Vitam & misericordiam tribuisti mi-  
hi, & visitatio tua custodiuit spiritum  
meum. Responsum—

18



After an early experimental stage he reached a level of technical competence not effectively surpassed until the 19th. century. Some of the disciplines such as punchcutting and casting small objects were already used in specialised metal working, such as the manufacture of clocks. But the way in which he focussed these skills to produce movable type was to remain unchanged for three centuries.

Thousands of types were required for printing a book so Gutenberg used the process of replica casting.

For printing purposes these types had to be 'mirror image' so the first part of the process was to engrave a reversed letter in relief at the end of a long piece of steel called a punch<sup>17</sup>. This was stuck into a bar of copper to make a matrix<sup>18</sup> like a mark made by a seal in sealing wax. The next implement in the process was the core of Gutenburgs invention.

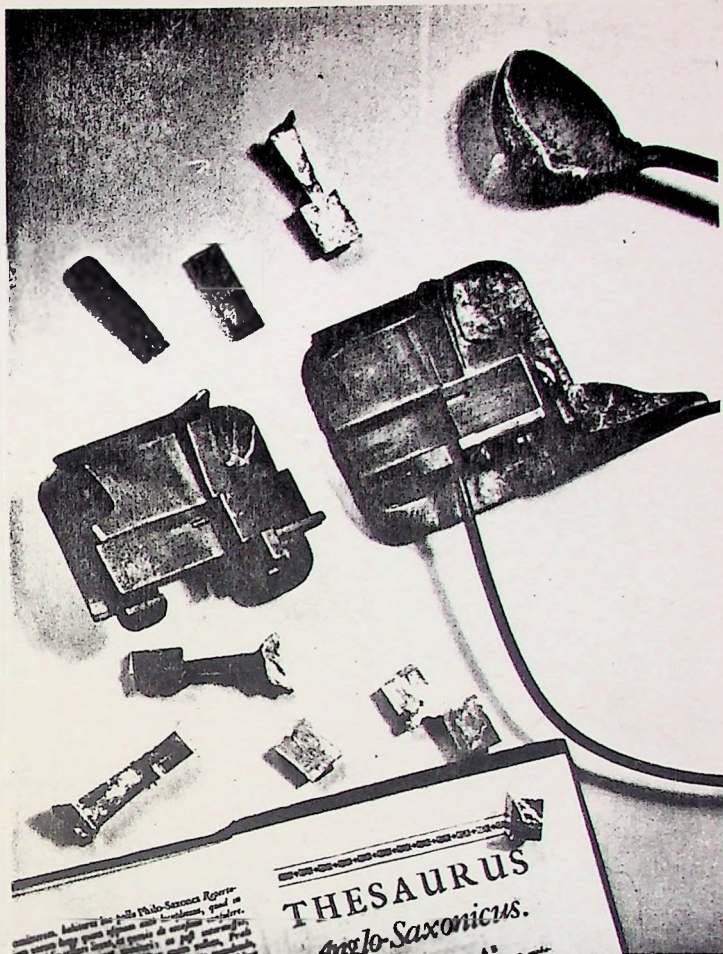
He developed a hand mould<sup>19</sup> for casting the letters from the matrices. It consisted of two interlocking halves such that when put together they slide parallel against one-another. This was to facilitate the varying widths of letters to be cast, from the wide W to the thin i, the letters when cast were all the same 'height to paper' to form an even surface for printing and they were all on the same body size.

The preparation of a special ink that would adhere to the metal types was developed from the discoveries made by Flemish painters. The ink was made from a pigment ground in linseed oil.

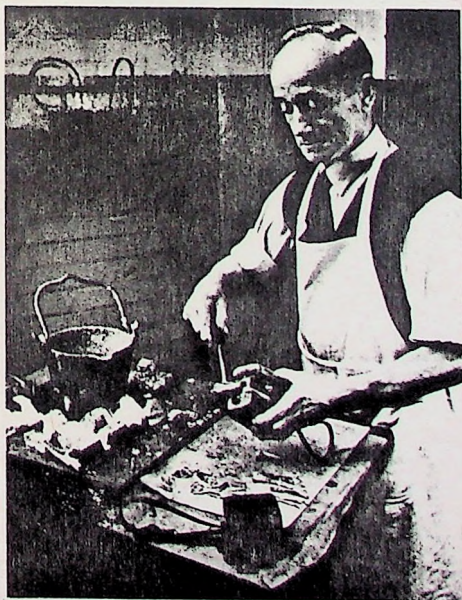
Another item without which printing as we know it would not have been possible was the domestic screwpress. These presses were in use in Europe from the first century A.D. for pressing linen and for extracting oil from olives. Continuous squeezing pressure was not needed for printing so the press was adapted.

In the first thirty years of printing the books were almost indistinguishable from the hand written manuscripts. Printers went to great lengths to simulate the whole range of scripts in





19



Casting type in a hand mould.



mid-fifteenth century Europe.

Gutenberg, for his 42-line Bible<sup>15</sup> cast many versions of the various letters so as to simulate the textura of the liturgical texts. His font consisted of over 300 characters whereas the modern printers font of upper and lower case roman consists of hardly more than 50 characters.

It was only at the beginning of the 16th. century that books began to develop their own characteristics such as title pages and page numbers. Until then when coloured initials and other illustrations were required they were done by a specialist.

Within about fifty years of Gutenbergs death type began to shake off manuscript characteristics. The designs fell into two general groups the 'Gothic'<sup>15</sup> and the 'Roman'<sup>16</sup>. The Roman types were first cut in Strazburg in 1467 and reached a level of perfection in Venice in the types of Nicholas Jenson in 1470. Italic type belongs to this group as well. It was developed from a kind of fast writing known as Chancery script used in special documents. The punch cutter Francisco Griffo adapted it for printing. Parallels can be drawn between Italic and insular miniscule as it was also a fast hand which was adapted for printing types.

Gothic type got its name from its similarities with the pointed architecture of northern Europe. It was also known as black letter or textura because it is a condensed face which composes to form a closely packed 'woven' page. It reached its final form in Augsburg and Nürnberg around 1510-20 and remained in common use in Germany until the middle of the twentieth century. It rarely appears now except for some newspaper titles and the like.

The Humanists scholars of Europe preferred the Roman as they regarded it as the most proper medium for the transmission of the ancient texts. They had rediscovered the Carolingian miniscule and used it as a model. When printing arrived in England in 1476 by William Caxton, the types he used were all Black Letter. His foreman however, Wynkyn de Worde, first used Roman letters in 1520. Gradually the English followed the lead of the French using the Roman type for ordinary printing.

As printing spread across Europe the ever increasing readership preferred books printed in their mother tongue as opposed to Latin. It was only in England and Spain that books in the vernacular outnumbered the Latin ones from the very beginning. Books in the English language made up four/fifths of Caxtons output.

The relationship between the printing press and the spoken vernacular is a very interesting one, particularly in the case of minority languages of which Gaelic is one. Wherever a press is set up spelling tends to become standardised. This happened in the case of English under the influence of Caxton and his successor De Worde.

If the number of indiginous speakers of a language is small or if the group is economically weak the absence of a press may lead to its disappearance or at least exclude it from the realms of literature. A case in point is the Cornish language which almost became extinct for the lack of printed literature.

The minority languages of Spain were given a fair chance of survival due to their early appearance in print. The Basque language was first printed in 1545. In fact the first printing presses set up in the Iberian peninsula were in Catalonia. This seems to have been one of the reasons for its survival despite Spanish being the dominant means of communication. The Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian and Finish languages might in the course of the 16th. century have been absorbed into German, Swedish and Polish had they not been preserved in print.

The Welsh language was shaped by Bishop William Morgans translation of the Bible (1588). In it he combined the vocabulary of the Bardic poetry with the rhythm of Jeromes Vulgate and the Geneva Bible. At around the same time, also in connection with Queen Elizabeth efforts to establish a national church, the Irish language first found its way into print.



600y ar ar ngnjoma rruy b fén, nó as  
 ar otuill tēanar, aco ar do tēoca rre mo  
 mōj rre, do mē m q do gēall tū ar ngy  
 6e 6ēj deacho, y na hīar matuy do nī  
 mōj o o r do tēab ar o uīn, an āj m do  
 Mhyc jōm uī jora C mōj o ar O t j gēq-  
 na. Neōc tuz ar thne dūj n, j n fén, do-  
 c r y n j u g a o, y do t j onol agceān acēle,  
 na aj n n j rēn, lē lān gēalla o dea m b t a, go  
 m b j a t r ē f ē n, n a r m e a r g, y n a r m e a-  
 o o n, y n j h e j n a m ā j n, a c o g o m b j a t h  
 r ē a g a j n o, m a r a j o n e a g u s m a r t e a c o u  
 r e d o t a o b d o c ū a c o r a, o r a g a j l o ū, n  
 g a c u l e n e t e o ā b r a j c r l o r ē d o o t h o j l  
 b e a m u j g t e r e j n t u g t a o ā m a c o a n a s  
 l e a r. U m e j j a t ā m o j o g u o g y d e a g u r  
 g u o g ē r a t a c, a a t q j r m o t r o c y r e, d o  
 g n u j r g r ā d a c o j o m p r o o c u g a j n, y g a n  
 a r b r e a g t h a j g j o m a r c a c a n o a r r e a-  
 c m ā j f a o b a o ā g r a n o d o l e a n n j n o r m y n  
 a n n j l e r t h u j l l e a m a r d o m ē r c h o m a, y  
 c o m t r u j m t f l r g r a, y d o g ē r o j o g a l-  
 t u r d o t e a f o r u j n, a c o g a b j n a n o d o  
 t r o c u j r e

So from this brief account we can see just how far the art of printing had come before reaching Ireland.

The first printing press was set up in Dublin in 1550 in the reign of Edward VI by Henry Powell, printer to the king. Its first production was issued the following year. It contained 300 pages and was entitled 'Boke of Common Prayer'. Powell was an excellent craftsman. His pages are well designed and his lines are neatly spaced. Black Letter is used throughout and the text is decorated with capitals and tail-pieces.

The first printing in Irish appeared twenty years later in 1571. Queen Elizabeth presented a font of Irish type to John Kearney, treasurer of St. Patricks Cathedral, Dublin. It was used first in the printing of a broad sheet 'Tuar Ferge Foighide' a religious poem by Philip O'Huagain. The first book published in Elizabeths type was 'Cabidil Gaoidheilge agus Caiticismo',<sup>20</sup> which translates as 'Irish Alphabet and Catichism' and first appeared on June 20th. 1571. In the preface Kearney mentions that a previous edition appeared in 1563. However, this reference is all that is known of it.

The contents include elements of the Irish language and twelve articles laid down by the Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker. In fact the resemblance of certain characters in the font to the Anglo-Saxon font commissioned by Parker from John Day has led some to believe that they are one and the same.

Only nine of the lower case letters in the font are obviously Irish (d,e,f,g,i,p,r,s,t) Some of the capitals approach Irish forms. Caps. B and D are uncials. The lower case a is italic and the rest of the lower case is Roman. The book also contains initial letters and ornaments used by Humphrey Powell.

Although there is an unevenness within the words mainly caused by the italic 'a' the overall effect is even and well spaced. The type composes to form an upright regular line. A number of manuscript contractions remain which as we have seen dates from the early printed books. The  $\bar{n}$  stands for double n. The only contraction which appears here and which has stood the test of



time is the ampersand, a symbol resembling the arabic figure seven. This form of ampersand is derived from the Tironian notes a brand of shorthand which the old Romans used to record speeches. It is very different from the usual symbol & :an intimate merging of the letters e and t which can be seen in many variations in the Book of Kells.

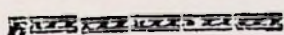
Lower case s and r are in their long miniscule form. Although many of the Irish letters are derived from miniscule models some of the roundness so characteristic of insular majuscule is manifested in their design. This helps to give the face a lighter feeling despite its being of a heavy weight.

When an alphabet is designed one basic requirement is that each character should be sufficiently different from its neighbour so as to avoid confusion. In this face the terminal of 'd' is not extended enough from the main body of the letter in order to distinguish it from the letter 'o'. The accents on the vowels at times appear accidental. They are not of a similar weight as the character so I am left with the impression that character and accent were not considered as an integrated unit at the design stage. The aspirate dot on the consonants is more successful, though at times it is a bit too high.

Queen Elizabeth's type was used between 1571 and 1652 to print several other books of which only four remain. One was a translation of the New Testament by Daniel for which it was first designed. It was also used in 1608 for a translation of the Book of Common Prayer. The type was improved for this by the addition of ornamented capitals.

The Church of England's initiative of spreading the faith in the language of the people inspired the Irish Franciscians to counter attack with their brand of propaganda by establishing a printing press in Belgium for the publication and dissemination of Catholic books in Irish. Although some printing of Catholic material was carried out in Waterford and Kilkenny it was difficult and dangerous.

anreazalsz.



218. 211b.

Don 2ue 211a.

2202 do bhealch  
s2 2 211a. 7c.

**O**illgíchean an ro  
páilte anáingil Ga-  
briáil nē 211a anean  
ro 2ab mac dē Críofó na bionn.

Óró a fíor agác 2unab u-  
me aweiunio an tae mairia an-  
easg na pároie, anan naóóan  
2o bpoil 211a na habcóró  
foián, 7 Críofó, do néin m 2.

cniosdoliohe.67

2a Críofó na abcóró agám,  
foián, 7 aneazg; 2onad aye nī  
an nāpáio an nācēuiníto 2an  
nācān le 2hāg ccríofó, do  
beinmto 2hāro an 211a, ionār  
2o ccuríto impóe an amac, 7 2  
2eān an mēic 2lōnā, 22 nācēuin  
2rōib do 2abairte 2ūm:or ar  
2nācblī ag 2aomib anean 2ap-  
aro 2cēuiníto 2 ppoil, labāc  
nīr na 2aomib ar 2nēis do 2ro  
2an 2ūm na 2iāg nī, ionār 2o  
mbiāo animpóe lā. 2weinmto  
do 2eroneitibh, 2ia 2obfcha  
2a 2or accéill 2ab eānre, 7  
2aome muiūmte agā 2poil 2olār  
uīte nī, ionār 2unab cōfāil  
2ūm beir 2ānā uīte, 211a uime  
2weinmto 2nācān anāingil 2an  
2ūnācāb oile ag 2cō na páil-



Only one printer in Ireland was granted a licence to print and he was directly appointed by the King. Many of the Irish scholars had moved to the continent anyway so it was inevitable that printing in Irish should move to the continent.

The Franciscans had a type designed and cut for them (probably at Antwerp) which they brought to Louvain sometime between 1614 and 1616. It was first used to print 'An Teagasg Chrosdaidhe' by Bonaventura O'Heoghusa and is known as Louvain Type A<sup>21</sup> so as to distinguish it from another Louvain type first used in 1641. This type is generally regarded as being the first printed Irish letter because it was designed by Irish scholars from Irish manuscripts. It is said to have been based on the handwriting of one of the monks therefore it has many miniscule characteristics. The wedge serifs are pronounced on many of the verticals. The whole alphabet has an angular appearance and is inclined towards the right. Lower case d and g are more like their insular majuscule forms. The d is quite distinctive here even when placed beside the o.

I drew a parallel between the Italic type and this type in the short synopsis of the development of printing. We will have to wait a while, however, before an Irish type reaches the same level of uniformity as the early Italics.

It is interesting to speculate on the possibility of the Franciscans taking their cue from the 'upright' Elizabeth's type, had their design been executed in Ireland. They might also have had more examples of the majuscule to draw from. As manuscript letters have to be simplified and disciplined to meet the requirements of printing the more rounded regular forms of insular majuscule would have proven a better starting point for the Irish character in print.

This will be seen later in an analysis of Petries type of 1841. The sprawling spidery forms of the Louvain type remained in use for over a hundred years directly influencing type designs to follow and is therefore responsible for the unsatisfactory appearance of Irish in print until the 19th. century.

21 Μὴ ἀνῶντες τὸν ἥσαντα  
 ἡδὺναι τὴν ἐν ὑμῶν σ.  
 Ἐποιοῦντες, ὡς ποιοῦτε  
 ὁμοῦ καὶ ἡμεῖς.

214 che u o ch 216 101 E.

Don mo'o aḡ aḡ cōiḡ cūaḡtiḡ-  
aō, nō manḡuḡaōh ro rōmnaḡ  
aḡ aḡ mūḡtiḡ lēuḡab toḡl tēaōn  
iḡḡnoḡa.

2) хтүр, төүнтүр сүдүтүгдү  
 бөүр 7 каттүгдүдү аң аң түсү  
 түрүбү мјдү аң мообүтүдүрүрү

(YY) Handwriting of Michael O'Clery, [Vellum MS.; B.1.A.1]

2. **U**thom oel m' talient zucha haabint opacht, sif vachapp le o a entum  
 op' l' a lo z' o h' u' t' k' h' s' m' a' i' s' e' r' s' u' o' p' a' l' e' c' u' l' e' o' p' i' n' o' . w' o' n' d' o' n'  
 o' i' s' p' r' o' u' t' e' l' h' , d' u' p' l' e' m' t' e' s' o' t' o' z' h' a' t' h' a' s' c' o' m' o' s' e' s' l' i' e' c' t' h' c' o' h' a' t' e' l' a' t'  
 a' n' b' l' e' d' a' m' p' s' o' a' o' i' s' e' l' o' s' t' . 1634 .  
**A**s p' c' o' t' e' l' i' n' o' p' o' l' l' e' s' t' p' o' n' a' l' e' c' o' m' a' n' m' z' u' c' h' p' o' n' e' t' h' i' m' b' i' r' a' p' l' e' n' o' o' n' o' i' s' m' z' a' c' h'  
 a' p' p' i' s' o' u' c' a' p' u' s' e' s' p' a' m' o' i' s' o' s' p' o' n' a' s' t' u' a' c' h' p' u' s' t' i' s' a' p' z' l' o' r' m' a' i' s' e' . l' e' s' a' p' a' p' m' i' t' e' n' i' s' e'  
 o' n' o' i' s' t' h' e' (a' i' s' o' b' a' p' a' b' p' o' m' e' t' a' ) m' a' p' i' o' r' p' l' i' n' o' u' e' t' a' n' a' p' l' i' n' i' t' s' u' a' p' . l' e' e' o' l' a' s' n' a' n' a' p' e' e' , l' e'  
 n' a' m' a' p' s' o' b' e' a' u' s' i' s' i' s' p' m' a' p' p' i' s' p' l' i' m' d' o' t' o' t' a' b' e' t' o' c' u' m' p' o' l' a' s' a' p' a' p' d' a' t' h' c' o' m' b' e' r' e'  
 a' t' e' l' i' n' a' s' , l' e' e' o' l' a' s' i' s' z' u' c' h' o' p' a' m' s' m' o' e' w' o' t' h' a' p' o' l' e' e' p' a' s' t' o' c' u' t' e' p' o' t' a' p' p' i' s' a' p' l' e'  
 l' e' a' n' a' p' p' i' s' l' e' c' i' a' h' a' p' i' e' t' a' p' o' b' a' t' a' p' i' t' e' l' e' s' i' n' z' a' n' t' u' t' h' e' e' . m' o' s' i' m' e' , n' o' m' o' n' o' i' s' o' i' s' o'  
 p' r' o' p' a' r' o' l' . l' e' e' p' e' o' i' , a' n' o' r' o' t' h' p' u' s' i' s' p' o' t' .

(LL) Signature of Michael O'Clery, [Vellum MS., B.1.A.1]

bon <sup>baŋceapra</sup> michel <sup>tomiaŋ</sup> oclenrsh



When type is designed for different sizes simultaneously slight changes have to be made to the design each time it is reduced so as not to impair legibility. One tendency is for the counters (enclosed spaces of characters) to become larger. Lynam considered the Louvain type to be cast on too small a body. Because the characters were complicated they would have benefitted from being cast on a larger body or else simplify the designs.

'The larger the letter the lighter the faces can be  
The smaller the letter the lighter the faces must be'

For example the eye of the e would have been improved had it been opened up. As it stands it appears as a tiny white dot and at times completely flooded with ink giving an overall blotchy appearance.

Other factors further impairing legibility are the unevenness of the interletter and interword spacing combined with the fact that three different slopes are employed in the alphabet.

After printing several poems and pamphlets the Louvain College Press went silent as far as known records show until 1641 when Louvain Type B<sup>22</sup> was first used. The first book published in the new type was 'Riaghuil Treas Uird S. Froinsias'. It was more upright, better proportioned and more evenly spaced. Unfortunately, the letters were still badly shaped. The face was used in only three or four books and last appeared in 1728. These include 'Suim Bhunudhasach an Teagasc Chroisdaidhe' issued in 1663 and Hugh McCurtains 'Elements of the Irish language' in 1728. This work and Michael O'Clerighs 'Focloir' (1643) were the only books of a non-religious character issued at the Louvain press.

Michael O'Cleirigh along with three assistants was responsible for the Annals of the Four Masters. He entered the Franciscan Order at Louvain in 1620 but spent much of his time collecting manuscript material on the lives of the Irish saints and anything he could find of historical interest. In the following paragraphs

I compare his handwriting<sup>23</sup> as it appeared in 1634 with the Louvain types.

Although the handwriting is dated much later than the first Louvain type they have a lot in common. The type is of a similar weight to begin with. If the compositor had increased the interlinear space to the same extent as in the handwriting, legibility might have been improved.

In a formal analysis of the letterforms we can see that although the printed type approaches the forms made by the quill the contrast between thick and thin strokes is not as pronounced. The successful printing of very fine thins was not possible until much later with advances made in paper making and refinements to the press.

The letters a and d are similar in both illustrations. The 'a' is angular at a similar slope and the 'd' has a distinctive finishing stroke to the left. The 'g' in Louvain 'A' has a large bowl whereas O'Cleirigh does not close off the bottom at all. The sickle like shape which he makes is more in keeping with the miniscule 'g' of the manuscripts. The 'g' of Louvain B is also closed but it is closer to O'Cleirigh's version with the sharp angle just above the bowl. The minim strokes of m and n get thinner as they descend in both the printed type and the handwriting. The ascenders and decenders are extended more in the manuscript.

The weakness of the printed types is probably due to their effort to closely mimic the scribal forms. Letters which are usually linked or flourished will not necessarily look good separated, regardless of how fine the letter spacing.

The Louvain types are interesting historically because they represent the first effort to adapt the Irish alphabet for printing and because they effected the appearance of Irish afterwards. However, not all the typefaces designed since then are worthy of consideration in terms of an appreciation of the later Irish types. Therefore I have taken the liberty to discuss some designs in more detail than others and overlook some completely.



Do Sacramajnt na hajtnje.

О. Снеговъ Свѣдѣніе на баѣнѣ  
аѣ

Մ. Լէյճոյ Տէրութեան ինքնագրէն ըստ  
նրա 14 մարտի.

O ža mēno a ta vo nja<sup>š</sup>anaš q an te  
 glacaš i.

**ἢ** Ἐπεὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦτο, ἡρώδης ἐλπίσας  
 ἵνα ἑκταὶσὶ ἐκείνη, καὶ λογισθεὶς το  
 ῦτο ἵνα ἰσχύῃ .

Ꭰ. ᎠᎵᎠᎠ ᎠᎵ ᎠᎵᎠ ᎠᎵ ᎠᎵᎠ ᎠᎵ ᎠᎵᎠ  
ᎠᎵᎠ.

**Ἡ** Μα ὁ ἰσχυρὸς θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν ἐκτίσας  
 τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ἀνὰ μέτρον τοῦ ἔργου καὶ τῆς  
 χάριτος, καὶ ἀνὰ ἡμετέραν ὁλοκληρίαν, καὶ ἵνα  
 ἡμεῖς ἡμετέρας ἐκκλησίας ἐκτίσωμεν ἐν  
 ἡμῶν τῶν ἰσχυρῶν καὶ ἐν ἡμῶν τῶν  
 ἰσχυρῶν καὶ ἐν ἡμῶν τῶν ἰσχυρῶν.

[illegible]

Զևարօ, ԶԶԻ քուարօ մե : օրք ո՛ր  
 երբք քուր ու քնաք Զ քրօքքք, մար  
 քօ քիք ԶԶարք.

40. ʔɪgʊʔ an tən a dubɔt ʔe na  
neiteʔi, do tɔiʔbeɪn ʔe doib a lɔma  
aɪgʊʔ a toʔa.

41. 2lf an mberit micreidmxc doib-  
yion for the haiddecay, agur ag dñ-  
nam iongancais, a dubat yeisyon nu;  
an berl bio an bit agais an ro?

42. Չկայ Եղածարանն օրն ըն-  
դհն թորոնցե, Կայ Երն ծո ին մեկն.

43. *Alguar an na nglacai dóran,  
dúais ré na bfiadhngríon [iáb.]*

44. Agur a dubāc yē nū; ag yō  
na bnatra do labā mē nūb, a nūā do  
bi mē pōr bar bpoctā: gur ab ēigh na  
hyle neite atā ygruobta a nēf 2lhoi-  
ri, agur an yna fāigib, agur an yna  
falmrb am timcella, do coimlionā.

45. Չկ' րմ ծօրհրլ ր՛՛ զ տղծրԵ,  
 10հւր ծօ ծտղծրծիւր ն՛ ղ ղհւօրծղիւ,

46. ʔlɣur a dubɔt rē mū, ɣur  
mar ʔo do bi rē rɣriobɔta, aɣur ɣur

μαρ γο δοξ εἶη δι Χριστοῦ φυλῆς,  
αὐτοῦ εἰσέρχε οἱ μαρτύρῃς ἀν τῆς λά:

47. Չիցաւ աւրիցէ ցար մաւշոն-  
նայ յա երեսն ծո յշնուր յա անոն ծո  
նա հըլէ շնուցըրծ ցի շուրիցնած օ ին-  
քալեմ.

48. Չկայ և բնի բաժնեջեժնա ու  
նշանքա.

49. Ձեզք քեւ, \* Երբոքն ձեւ-  
անդ մար քեւն զգաւ: Եւ քանո՞ւ  
զգա՞ լաւալեմ ո՞ ճօ ճերէք  
քա՞յա և ուս քանո՞ւ.

50. Agur rug se amac go foite  
Betania iad: agur ar doogbail a  
lam, do beirge se iad.

51. \* Զից տալա ար մերժ ձա  
մբռնած ո՞, իսկ իճարած իւն է, Է-  
ից իսկ տօճած իւն ար դիմ է.

52. Agyr an na onórtao dóib-  
 ren dílleadaí go Mianúsalem maille  
 le gáindeoirí mór.

53. Զիցս Եւ Եւիբի Եւ Զնա՛ւ ա՛հ Բա  
 Եմքոլլ, ա՛հ մոլա՛ս ա՛հս ա՛հ Եղնս՛ն  
 Օհ. Ամեն.

Belgium offered many facilities for the smuggling of books into Ireland however by 1676 the Franciscans on the continent decided that the output of the Louvain press was not enough. So it was at this time that printing was begun in Rome. In 1676 the Irish priests in Rome had a new Irish type cut for the press of the Sacra Congregato de Propagande Fide. Between 1676-1707 a number of works of a religious nature were published.

The first book published was the 'Liscerna Fidelium'<sup>24</sup> by Fr. Francis O'Molloy who also wrote the first grammar of the Irish language.

This type showed some development from its predecessors. The letters were independent of one another but when placed together they formed an upright and regular line, although still not well proportioned. For example the caps seem to belong to an alphabet of a completely different weight. The tails which are attached to h, l, m and n are in complete contradiction to the character of the type. Here again the quality of printing is blotchy and the lines are unevenly composed.

From 1707 the type remained unused until it was taken by Napoleon who gave it to the Impremiere Nationale de Paris where it was used in 1804.

The type which was most influenced by the Louvain type was Moxons type of 1681<sup>25</sup> Robert Boyle, in his efforts to have the teaching of the reformed church available in the vernacular of the Indians, Welsh, Turks and Irish, employed Moxon to cut a new Irish type for the printing of William Bedells Old Testament. Queen Elizabeths type of 1571 had disappeared. Louvain A type was used as a model. Both in design and in body the letters are very similar. It is an improvement on the Louvain type, being more upright and more evenly spaced though still not an attractive type. It remained in use for over a hundred years last appearing in 1820.



26

27

Printing in Irish in both England and Ireland during the 18th. century was confined yet again to a few religious works. Most of the printing in Irish in this century was in the Roman letter until the appearance of Charlotte Brooks Reliques of Irish Poetry in 1789.<sup>26</sup> The printing of this work in Dublin marks the liberation of the language from the ban which had been placed on it for so long. It was also the first literary work in the Irish character printed in Dublin.

The type is again based on the manuscripts however, P.J.Madden points out:

"The quaint beauty which the designer gave to the printed page, proving beyond doubt that the development of Irish types depends not on imitating the manuscripts but in understanding and interpreting the nature of printing itself"

It was a very large and legible type, well planned for printing and pleasing to the eye but it proved too expensive, in terms of paper required, for ordinary use and appears in only four other books in the early 19th. century. Its success lies in a more uniform stroke throughout although some like 't' and 'A' are slightly askew.

The first quarter of the 19th. century saw the introduction of five new types of which John Barlow's (1808)<sup>27</sup> is the most important. It can be seen as the first effort to produce a printing type as distinct from a type based on handwriting. At first the caps were Roman but he altered these at a later date. The letters were well proportioned and formed a good line. Their main weakness was in their founding. They were unfortunately badly cut and cast. The finished printed page has a blotched appearance mainly due to the small size of the type. It seems to have been an experiment because it rarely appears on its own in a book, but is usually coupled with Brookes and Moxons.

Christies type<sup>28</sup> which was the forerunner of the Irish type commonly used towards the end of the century was cut in 1815, the first type cut in Ireland, and is generally regarded as a tasteful interpretation of the Irish letter. It is a large and



Do b'ho deaifad na m-bláit le r'gail ba deaif,  
 Gan clár 'na leacain, ba b'p'eáigead lara ;  
 'S a p'ior-beol gan inagad, gan inóio !  
 'S a mala gan cáim aisi a fám-deaif, aibig,

XXXX L3(13).

- 1 ԱՅՅԱՏ ԵՐԱՊՆՅ ՊԼՈՐԵ ԿՈՄԵՆՏԱՐԻՍՅԱԾ ԸՆՈՐԷ  
 ԶՐԱԷ ՎԵ Ե ԶՅՈՒՆ Ե ԸՆԵԼԵ, Դ ԾՈ ՔԱԾՆ ՔԻՄ, Ք  
 [ԴԻԱԾ] ԲՈ Ղ ԵՐԻՇԻՄԱ ԾԱԵՐՈՆ Ե ԱՅՇԵՐՈ ՏԻՔԻ, Յ  
 ՍԵՂՄԱՅ [ԻՅ] ԻԱԾ.  
 2 ՏԵ ԼԱ ԾՈ ՏԵՂԵԳ ՕԲՅ, ԱԲ Ե ՂԵՐԻՄԱԾ ԼԱ ԵԻՅՈՒ ՔԵ Ղ  
 ԼԱ ՔԱԴՐՈՆ ԱԶՆԻ, ՔԱԾՈՒՆ ՔԱՐԱՆՈՒՄԵՐԱ ԾՈՒ ԱՅՇԵՐՈ  
 ՅՈՈԾ ԵՎ ԵԻՇ ԵԻՐԱՆԵՂ ԱՐՈՒ, ԵՐԱՐԻՇԵՐ ԸՍՄ ԵԻՄ ԲԱ  
 Դ Ե.  
 3 ԱՅ ԵՐԱՐԻՇԵՐ ԵՐՈՒՄ Ե ԲԵՅ ԵԱՐ ՄԱԵԿԱՐԻՔ\* Ե ԼՈ Ղ  
 ՔԱԾՈՒԹԵ.  
 4 ԱԶԱՐ ԼԱԲՅ ՊԼՈՐԵ ՔԵ ԿՈՄԵՆՏԱՐԻՍՅԱԾ ԸՆՈՐԷ  
 ԶՐԱԷ ՎԵ, ԾԱ ՔԱԾ, [ՔԻ] Ե ԲՈ Ա ՄԻՈ ԾԱԵՐՈՆ Ե ԱՅ-  
 5 ՇԵՐՈ, ՅԱ ՔԱԾ, . . ԱԾՔՆԵՑ ԵՐԱՆԻ ՕՐԻՄԱՆ ԾՈՒ ԱՅՇԵՐՈ  
 ՅՈՈԾ ԵՎ ԵԻՇ [ՅԱ] ԵՔԻԼ ԵՐՈՒՅԵ ԵՈՒԼԵՐՈՒՄ, ԵՍՅԱՐ Ե  
 ԼԵՐԻ, ՕՐԻՄԱՆ ԾՈՒ ԱՅՇԵՐՈ; ՕՐ, Դ ԱՐԻՇԵԴ, Դ ՔԻՐԱՐ, . .

ʒps IN NOSTRA. Ninnib lámiben mac echach ippe do pignu hunc qnumm bo bprize.  
 Uel ip piac pleibeb do pigne. Dicumt alii combes Ulcan auppbeccan do gnet. Ap  
 ire po teclamarcan penta bprize in oén leab. Audite uingimur lauber ip a chor-  
 rach. Ono auppcech papi. Thé pichum tna bo pigne. Thé caibtil and, ʒ cechpi  
 lmi cech caibtil ʒ pe pillaba béc cech lne. Dicumt alii combas mór incimmurpa,  
 aché ni failer iunb aché cechpi caibtil be, .i. in cet caibtil, ʒ na cpi caibtil  
 dedencha, caupa bneucacpi.

PS IN NOSTRA INSOLA QUE UOCATUR HIBERNIA  
OSTENSUS EST HOMINIBUS MAXIMIS MIRABILIBUS  
QUE PERFECIT PER FELICEM CELESTIS VITE VIRGINEM  
PRECELLENTEM PRO MERITO MAGNO IN MUNDI CIRCULO

mnus iste angelice summeque sancte brigite  
pari non ualet omnia uirtutum mirabilia  
que nostris nunquam auribus si sint facta audiuimus  
nisi per istam uirginem marie sancte similem

elaborate letter which prints to give a clean, crisp definition. As with Brooks type it would not have stood a reduction to a smaller body thus making it unsuitable for general printing purposes. It was therefore reserved for printing special editions of poetry and the like. In 1816 it was used in the second edition of *Reliques of Irish Poetry*.

The nineteenth century type which is regarded as the first of the modern designs is the type which Edmund Fry cut in 1818<sup>29</sup> for the British and Foreign Bible Society. It marks the change from angular to round letter which took place in the 19th. century. The tendency was brought to perfection in the type designs of George Petrie for the publications of the Irish Archaeological Society.

George Petrie (1790-1866) was a well known artist and antiquary who contributed many illustrations to guide books of Ireland making particular studies of Clonmacnois Cong and Killarney.

The types which he designed for the Archaeological Society fall into three distinct groups. Firstly the pica type<sup>30</sup> used for continuous text in the Society's Irish publications, secondly, the capital or uncial characters used in only one publication, 'Leabhar Imuinn'<sup>31</sup> by J.H. Todd in 1855 and finally the smaller type used for footnotes in the Society's publications.

Petrie's type first appeared in a book called 'Tracts Relating To Ireland.' Vol I.<sup>30</sup> of the publications of the Irish Archaeological Society 1841. The prospectus for the book states.

'Considerable trouble and expense have been incurred in selecting models for the Irish type from the most valuable of the early manuscripts'.

Lynam says that most of the forms are directly based on the round insular majuscule of the early manuscripts. Lower case b, l and n are copied straight from the Book of Kells. However, Colm O'Lochlainn is of the opinion that engraved or inscriptional lettering such as those on early christian shrines<sup>32</sup> and stone monuments may have influenced the cut of the letter more than any scribal forms.





CORMACAN ECCES MAC MAOLBRIGHDE  
AN T-AIRDPHILE, CC.

At bat, Aoir Cnirt, D.CCCC.XLUL.



Mhuirceartaigh, mic Neill naip,  
no gabair giallu Inni Paul,  
dur patair uile ind Ailuch,  
ir in dmanan gall groideach.

Deich g-ced laoc do cobair uan  
do Chenel Eógain armpuaid  
moiréimcell Epeann uile,  
a Mhuirceartaigh mongbuidé!

5

Uanp

The initial letter A is an exact fac-simile of an ornamented letter in the Book of Kells, a splendid MS. of the four Gospels, supposed to be of the sixth century, in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. The ornament at the top of this page is also copied from the same MS. The Society is indebted to Dr. Aquilla Smith

for the very accurate drawings from which these wood cuts were engraved.

1. *Muircheartach*.—Muirceartaigh, is generally anglicised *Murtogh*, and sometimes *Moriertagh*, and even *Mortimer*; and in this form the word is used as a Christian name. As a surname we find it spelled *Moriarty* in many parts of Ireland

FROM TRACTS RELATING TO IRELAND VOL. I. 1841

+ HÁC CRUCE CRUX TEGITUR QUÁ PASUS CONDITOR ORBIS

Processional Cross of Cong

'This is as it should be. In all countries engravers have always helped to formalise the alphabet to meet the exigencies of type-setting'

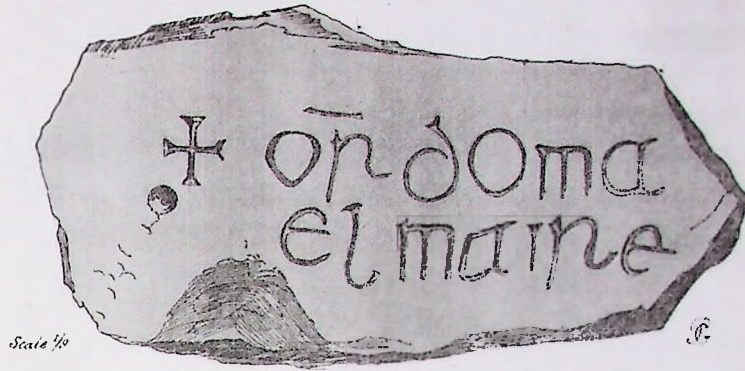
George Petrie was well acquainted with both scribal and inscriptional forms. Both sources are not as opposed as it may seem. It was suggested earlier that some characteristics of the scribal hand may be due to the influence of Byzantine metalwork. We can not know the inter-relationship that existed between the scribes, the metal workers and the stone-carvers in the Middle Ages. It is possible that they borrowed ideas from one another. O'Lochlainn is highlighting the engravers involvement in the process of making metal type, as we saw earlier it is no accident that the earliest type-founders and printers were goldsmiths.

It is curious that while the great bulk of sepulchral inscriptions of most countries are in Latin those of Ireland are in the vernacular. As early as 1822 Petrie had started to collect rubbings and make drawings of these inscriptions at Clonmacnois and other ecclesiastical centres.

As we have already examined the lettering of the Book of Kells it might be useful to look at one of these inscriptions and compare it to Petries finished type designs. Colm O'Lochlainn used Petries type as a model for his face ColumCille, so inscriptional lettering has a bearing on his design also.

The inscription OR DO MAELMAIRE<sup>33</sup> which was found at the nunnery church of Clonmacnois contains both forms of e which appear in the Pica type. The eye of Cap. E is closed, however, the crossbar of lower case e extends beyond the intersection with the curve. This projection also occurs in the Book of Kells when the e appears at the end of a word or a sentence. Petries 'a' is in its half uncial form as opposed to the forked uncial form of the Gaelic types before it. Again there is a similarity with the Clonmacnois inscription, having the truncated remains of the hooked terminals seen on the stone. The l is very similar in both cases starting with a wedge and finishing with a hook. The main difference is that the stroke of the inscription is





Scale 1/10

OR DO MAELMAIRE.

33

Peachear do Thuairpe Aigne 7 do Chumain Foba 7 do Cammin innri Cealtara ipin ecclaiar i nimir Cealtara for loe nDeirce-heire, ebon in ecclaiar miop do ponaob la Cammine ann. baccarpoih din ag cabant annicair-thera for Thuairpe. Maire a Thuairpe, ol Cammine, ciob beir maic lae do lionob na hecclaiar i etam. Precepar Thuairpe he, 7 ipeub a dubairt, no ba maic lim a lan bi op 7 dapeccat, 7 ni ap puint an doihainpi, aec dia tioblacab for manmian do naemliabh, 7 do eccalraib, 7 ba gac nech do iarrfaib e apcena. Do riab Dia fupracat duit a Thuairpe, ol Cammine, 7 do beircair duit an epailceatn do ponaif dia cabent ap t'anniam, 7 pobbia neih iarraim. Ap buide linn, ol Thuairpe. Tura imoppo, a Chumain, ap Thuairpe, ciob beir maic lae do beir ann. Ro riab maic lim, ap Cummin, a lan do leabraib dia roibeet do aep leiginn, 7 ba riolaob bpeirec De i ecclaraib caic dia ecabent do lupce diabaib do eum an coimbeob. Tura imoppo, a Chummine, ol piace, ciob beir maic lae do beir ann. Precepar Cammine iab, 7 ipreab a dubairt, no ba maic lim a lan do riab 7 do galan do beir in corpp, 7 me reia occ imfulang nio pian.

Ro ppiet imoppo a niompaice o Dia .i. an calaib do Thuairpe, 7 ecena do Cumain Foba, 7 do riabub raeth, 7 galan do Chammine, conach beachab enaith de ppiapoile i etalmann, aec no legab imoppo a feoil 7 a petae ne hainceppaib gach galair dia mboi raip. Co nbeacatar imoppo for neamh uile la nimpaicib ipin ecclaiar. FINIS.

34

Paiste gearndaile b'ead Eiblis seo, agus don la amain bi si in a surde amuis ar an mbán i bfochair a deirbdeir; ni raib daoda go Dia le deunam aici agus bi si ag éirige tuirseac de. Bi si tan éis feucaint uair nó dó istead 'sa leabhar bi a deirbdeir a léigean, aec ní raib don peictidiri ná comradó cainte ann, agus nuair ná raib ní raib don tsult léi sin ann. "De a maic leabhar," arsaig Eiblis

35

### an cheao rann. an cheao cheacht:

De Chruetúgab, agus de épié an tuine. CEIST. Cé éruetuis, agus vo éuir air an raozal éu?

FREAGAR. Dia.

C. Cao fáit ap éuir Dia air an raozal éu?

F. Chum aithe vo beir air, eum e vo gna-úgab, eum a feirbír vo deanaob, agus eum an deata fionpuidhe vo fionpuidhe épié.

C. Cread ir éirgean vo deanaob éirge rin?

F. Cheirte neirde.

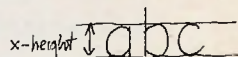
C. Cao iao ran?

F. An éao níó, gac níó o'foillrig Dia, agus a múinear an eaglaif uúinn, vo épi-veamain go viongmalta; an dapa níó, aie-eanta De agus na heaglaife vo éomlionaob; an tpeaf níó, na Sácpaimintide vo glacaob leir an ollmúgab riactarac; an ceatpamab

36

uniform whereas the type displays the thick and thin scribal characteristics.

In this type Petrie has brought together successfully the practicality sought by Barlow with the artistic achievement of Christie into a thoroughly servicable type. The design made to accommodate the smaller body size show that Petrie was sensitive to the printing profession as well as the reader. The counters have been enlarged so as not to impair legibility or act as ink traps. The bowl of g and the eye of e are examples of this as they become proportionally bigger. There is also a tendency for the x-height to increase as type faces are reduced. If we compare the pica and long-primer<sup>34</sup> versions of Petrie's design the x-height of the latter is proportionally bigger.



Both of these types were used by the society between 1841 and 1860. The Long Primer (10pt) last appeared in P.W. Joyce's Irish Grammar in 1896 and the Pica (12pt) in Clann Lir printed in 1922. The original punches were deposited in the Dublin University Press but have since disappeared.

The modern Monotype<sup>35</sup> and Linotype Irish fonts have their direct ancestor in a type that was introduced in 1863 by the short-lived Keating Society<sup>36</sup>. It was modelled on Petrie's Pica type but unfortunately some of the changes were regressive. The round a revived by Petrie is abandoned and here again the minim stroke of r is awkwardly splayed.

This type was little used until 1880 when the Gaelic League adopted it for their publications. There was such a revival in Irish literature by the end of the century that Irish type was in great demand. In the meantime the original makers of the Keating Society type had gone out of business so a new firm had to be found. The firm was Figgins<sup>37</sup> and new designs were supplied by a Professor O'Brien. A number of changes were made to the original designs. The long letters b, f, g, l, r and s were shortened, d, n, and o were slightly broadened. The a was given a slope to one side which I don't think looks very well. This type was to remain one of the standard types for printing Irish from 1900. The firm became R.H. Stevens & Co. which made all the Irish types at the beginning of this century except for those made by Monotype



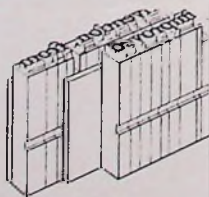
Δγυρ τάνγανδαι na τεάετα ριν πομπα γο h-εάνιυν 7  
 τάνγανδαι γο τεξ na Ριοξμαιόε a n-εάνιοιν an τανρην.  
 Δγυρ ar ann so bi φεapccur mac leve 7 macμαιόε έριeno  
 uime ann 7 ποφιαρρδαιξ ργεula úibpion. "Canar τάναζα-  
 байи, ιοιρ, a Δηξοτα?" ar φεapccur. "An baile ar a bfuil  
 aóбайи flata éreann," ar Δηξοτα, "7 mic ριοξ na h-εοpupa  
 uime ano .i. Congal mac Ruóμαιξε a n-iongnur na flata  
 φεapccur." "Cipeo aóбайи байи n-iomluaidiúρι uaidé, eioiρι?"  
 ar φεapγur. "Tánγamaiρine ar ceann cloinne Ruóμαιξε,"

and Linotype. But even these designs were issued under licence from this company.

Before taking a look at the Irish types of the twentieth century, it is worth mentioning briefly the developments in casting and composing which came about during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Until this time the methods of type-casting already outlined were still being practiced in most foundries. With a casting mould in one hand and a tiny ladle of molten lead in the other the workmen cast a single letter with each operation. With the industrial revolution in full swing the inventors tried to find ways to mechanise this process. Two Americans were ultimately successful, Ottmar Mergenthaler with his line composing machine and Tolbert Lanston with his single type 'Monotype' machine. Because the life span of punches was relatively short in both these machines they incorporated a mechanical punchcutting device invented by Linn Boyd Benton, based on the pantograph system.

The rapidity of casting with both these machines meant that distribution of type after printing could be abandoned. This had an enormous effect on the newspaper industry where each days used type was simply thrown back into the melting pot and the paper went to press each day with new type. Gradually these inventions effected the whole printing industry. By the end of the 19th. century some books were set-up by the monotype machines. The success of the machine was partly due to the wide range of the type-faces made available. It also had the advantage over the Linotype machine of changing single types, as opposed to complete lines, when corrections are required.





### PART 3.

#### THE IRISH TYPES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLUM CILLE GAELIC.

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We have seen that the Irish types of the early twentieth century were heavily influenced by the Figgins design of 1897. As Linotype and Monotype machines were introduced into Ireland the influence of this design could be seen in most printing in the Irish language. Colm O'Lochlainn, printer and publisher, realised that the Monotype typesetting machine would determine the appearance of printing in the Irish language whether in Gaelic or Roman letter for the following reasons:

'Comparitive ease in making the necessary numerous corrections in a language where accents abound and the spelling is not fully standardised; the flexibility of a monotype installation in the number of characters available both for Gaelic and Roman; the comprehensive keyboard which can be accommodated to almost any language in a few moments'.

O'Lochliann considered the designs of R.H. Stevens 'not very beautiful'. He thought them spiky and patchy lacking in both grace and dignity. This is I think a bit too severe, however, if seen in the light of Petries achievement they grow dim. O'Lochliann saw the lack of an italic Gaelic as a handicap to the printer of Irish. Many of the twenty faces which had been cut for Irish had a natural slope and could have been easily adapted to serve as a companion to the upright designs.

Another problem was that the Figgins design was not suitable for display work i.e. anything over 18 pt ( $\frac{1}{4}$ " high) used mainly for setting advertisements, tickets, invitations and general publicity matter.

*Specimen  
of Mr. Hammers new type*

die tauernreise / von otto reicher  
zweiter druck der stamperia del santuccio / florenz / winter 1931

das buch enthaelt 20 seiten in gross-oktav-schnitt der schrift/  
guss der lettern/satz und drucken entstammen der werkstatt/  
das hadernpapier der muehle enrico magnanis in pescia.  
von schrift und papier gibt diese ankuendigung eine probe.

es wurden 60 stueck gedruckt / davon 55 numeriert / und zwar:

5 stueck auf japanischem papier eins-fuenf: 125 schw-franken

36 stueck auf weissem hadernstoff mit dem wasserzeichen  
der werkstatt / erste wahl vi-xli: 90 schw-franken

14 stueck auf gleichem hadernstoff / mit dem wasserzeichen  
der werkstatt / zweite wahl 42-55: 60 schw-franken

14 stueck blieben als nicht numerierte makulatur.

die buecher werden nur gegen vorausbezahlung abgegeben.

38

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q

r s t u v w x y z

á é í ó ú

b c d f g m p s t

Á ß B b b c ò o ð ð é f g g š š í ñ ó p s t ú

Á ß B b b c ò o ð ð é f g g š š í ñ ó p s t ú

Á ß B b b c ò o ð ð é f g g š š í  
ñ ó p s t ú



O'Lochlainn was given the opportunity to rectify this when by chance he met the type designer Victor Hammer in the Offenbach typefoundry while on a visit to Germany. Not long before, Hammer had completed his 'Hammerschift'<sup>38</sup> an ornamental face based on the majuscule forms from the Book of Kells. The Irish forms of A,B,D,G and T were discarded because the face was designed for German and English, so Hammer agreed to let O'Lochlainn produce new designs for these letters together with the accented vowels and dotted consonants needed for Irish. O'Lochlainn called the type Baoithin<sup>39</sup> in honour of Colum Cilles scribe Baoithin to whom the saint entrusted the completion of his book before he died. The face proved to be very popular with the Irish printers. Unfortunately the punches and matrices were destroyed during the war.

On his way to Germany in 1929 O'Lochlainn stopped over in London where the seeds were sown for a project which proved to be O'Lochlainn's major contribution to Irish type design namely Colum Cille Gaelic. The idea for a new Gaelic bookface developed from a conversation with Stanley Morison of the monotype corporation. After many delays the I4 pt. upright appeared in 1935. An italic was added later. Colm O'Lochlainn did all the design work from Dublin so this necessitated an almost daily communication with Morison. There was a continuous exchange of drawings, reduced photographs, trial proofs and corrections. I will draw on some of the information in the correspondence to highlight design problems and changes.

O'Lochlainn realised that Irish type design through the ages had suffered from its fidelity to the personal idiosyncracies of the Irish scribes. He saw this as one of the main reasons for the lack of any major advances in Irish type. The type founders and punch cutters of the continent were not as closely supervised by the scribes. This freedom, according to O'Lochlainn, contributed in no small way to the development, along strict lines, of various beautiful designs of Black Letter and Roman.

Morison regarded the Gaelic, as a Roman in a state of arrested development. This would not matter if the normal Roman did not possess a greater utility value for the present day. The modern

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February 25, 1935

20111111

Dear O Lochlainn,

Many thanks for the returned proof. It is being over-run to the new measure and I am hoping to send you new proofs tomorrow. To my mind, the thing looks very promising.

Mr Tempest writes and sends a number of quite excellent criticisms which deserve consideration. I am a little too hard-pushed at the moment to write as I should, but I enclose a carbon of an interim reply I have sent because he seems to be looking at the design from a purely orthodox point of view.

I am very glad to hear about the New Testament. This is likely to be a good send-off for the fount. You should let me know what sizes you think they will want so that these can be the next to be put in hand.

The Works are making a new capital 'B' and lower-case 'a' and 'd', the latter on the model of the

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2 Letter to

Ref. No.

Hammerschrift sort.

I see the point about the <sup>d</sup>dition of the lower-case 'g', 'r', 's' and 't' in the normal humanistic form.. In my ignorant way I rather liked your old capital 'G', I mean the one with the large bowl descending, but I can see the utility of the new design. I also think the new capital 'A' an advantage. The letter you have drawn that I do not care for is the romanized cursive 'g'. I think this would be better reserved to the italic. Could you not develop from the present lower-case humanistic 'g'?

I am pleased on the whole with Mr Tempest's criticisms. He is very good-tempered about it, particularly as it seems years ago he suggested a new Gaelic - unfortunately without receiving any encouragement from us.

Yours

*Stanley Monson*  
JIA

COLM O LOCHLAINN ESQ



printer needed to produce all sorts of compositions and displays never demanded from a sixth century calligrapher.

Both men realised that there would be no future for Gaelic if it did not have capitals, lower case, small capitals, italic capitals and lower capitals and companion bolds.

20th. March 1935

Stanley Morison Esq.,  
The Fontotype Corporation Ltd.,  
43-44 Fetter Lane,  
LONDON. .

Dear Morison,

I had a long letter from Mr. Tempest in which he criticises almost every letter but all his criticisms seem to be from a calligraphic rather than from a typographic stand point and the pen made letters that he sent are of very little interest. Indeed I could improve on them very much with my own pen.

I am writing to him to tell him that my task has not been to devise a scribal-looking letter but a Gaelic-looking type. All my difficulties have arisen from the undisciplined sense of freedom which the scribes, being Irishmen, allowed to influence their penmanship.





## THE DESIGN OF COLUM CILLE

'I have been trying to convert the unruly and undisciplined Irish alphabet into a regular soldierly typographic font retaining a little of the particular charm of the scribal lettering but divesting it of it's over emphasised peculiarities'

'My task has not been to devise a scribal looking letter but a Gaelic looking type'

Colm O'Lochlainn on  
COLM CILLE

The first designs for Colum Cille were produced in 1933. From then until December 1935 when the 14pt. was first displayed in an Index to the Gaelic Journal,<sup>40</sup> the face had undergone a number of changes.

Basically the alphabet began as an exercise in improving Petries type of 1841. However, it soon developed into the styling of an alphabet based on two or three elements.

- 1) Lower Case 'l'
- 2) Lower Case 'O' with an oblique stress of 30 degrees N.W. to S.E. This is an echo holding the quill at an angle as seen clearly in Dorbbenes hand.

From these two elements all such letters as a, b, d, p are formed. The 'O' in combination with

- 3) A horizontal line

serves as the basis for the t and g.

No serif was allowed except a small lead-in from the left a reminder of the scribal or inscriptional wedge also seen in Petries design. This feature helps distinguish characters in unusual combinations. For example the i in Irish has no dot so a combination such as in could resemble an m. In this design however the wedge keeps them apart.

35

Trial No. 3

21-2-35

MONOTYPE

Colum Gille

Series No. 121—14 point

14 Set Composition

.2x.2

Line .1543

Redesigned B B d d

Seo cum a céile iad agur an beirt ag rapuḡad na n-uau, Domhnall ag iarraid iad do baint de agua Seáḡan na leograd leir iad. In an trarúḡad dóib ir gairid gur euadar i rḡórnaḡaib a'céile, agur im bḡra planncadar a céile go teit leir na ddipne. Ir gairid go raib locáin fola air fuaid an boḡair. Ní raib duine i gcúram na n-uau ir cúipeadar an céim ruar díob. ḡaib fear anuar ó'n muileann agur braitḡlín lán de mīn coirce aige ar dhom capaill. Do euaid ré eatorra ir coram ré ar a céile iad. Buail fear cuige trearna ir do fíarraig ré de cad é fáḡ na bpuighe, ir níor deim fear anḡcapaill aon blúipe amháin aḡt teatḡ ar an mbraitḡlín agur i rḡaoilead ir gac uile pīoc riam d'n mīn-coirce do lieḡint leir an abainn de dhruim an dhroicid. Bain re cúpla cpoḡa ar an mbraitḡlín, cum ná fanḡad pūinn de'n mīn coirce uirḡe. Bí mo Eḡeadóir ag féacaint ar an obair go léir, ir níor corpuig re ar an áit go raib ré 'na fearam ain fead na haimḡipe.

"A bḡiceann tú an braitḡlín rīn?" arḡa fear an capaill.

"Cīm go dian maitḡ," arḡ an fear eile.

"Níor bḡiu a bḡuil de mīn coirce ar an mbraitḡlín, rīn an cóḡ ó tuir deirpe. Dá mbead ciall aco, níor ḡábád dóib a leicéid do beir amlaidḡ," arḡa fear an capaill.

MONOTYPE

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPRSTU EFGJKQVWXYZ

ABCDEFGHIJMOPSTU

abcdefghijklmnooprctu dijkqvwxyz

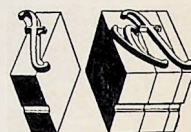
abcdefghijklmoprctu

£1234567890 . , ; : " ! ? - 0 1 —



All the capitals were brought to line save Cap. G whose lower lobe comes below the line. Here and there definitely Roman forms are used which O'Lochlainn regarded as being 'historically and scribally defensible and exceedingly clear and useful.

At an early stage in the design it was decided that the face should be capable of use for display work in any language so the eight extra letters not required for Irish were added as well as an upright d. At a later date the letters which deviated significantly in Irish were to be added in their normal forms.



The italic f on the left shows the overhanging kerns. On the right the kerns can be seen resting on the body of the next letter.

One of the early problems of design was that the accents and aspirate dots particularly on the caps had to be kerned i.e. they had to overhang the main body of the letter and as such were supported by the body of line above. Problems arose when the accents clashed with descenders from the line above sometimes causing whole lines to be set crooked. The solution was to cast the 14pt. face on a larger body size (16pt.) to accommodate the accents. Regarding this alteration O'Lochlainn suggested that when smaller sizes of the face were to be cut corresponding reductions should be made.

If we look at some of the trial sheets which O'Lochlainn received with redesigned letters included to his specifications it is possible to gain some insight into the finer points of type design.

Trial Sheet No. 3<sup>41</sup> contains a redesigned upper case B and lower case d. He had recommended a rounder B and he regarded the new version as satisfactory. The lower case d was a different matter. He had referred Morison to the form which he had designed for Hammershift with the thickening of the top stroke to be carried across the top of the letter. He also complained of the lower case a being too broad despite the fact that he had previously sent a slightly narrower form of it. The medial stroke of cap. F was to be moved further up the stem.

## "MONOTYPE"

Colum Cille

Series No. 121—14 point

14 Set Composition

.2x.2

Line .1543

Letter XC 7257

Seo cum a céile iad agur an beirt ag ráruḡaḡ na n-uas, Domnall ag iarrpaḡ iad do bainc de agur Seáḡan ná leogḡaḡ leir iad. Inr an tráruḡaḡ dóib iḡ ḡairio ḡur cuasḡar i ḡḡórnaḡaib a céile, agur im bora ḡlannḡaḡar a céile ḡo teit leir na dóirne. Ir ḡairio ḡo paib loḡáim ḡola air ḡuaḡo an bóḡair. Ní paib duine i ḡcúram na n-uas ir cuirḡaḡar an céim ḡuar díob. ḡaib ḡear anuḡar ó'n muileann agur bḡaiḡlín lán de mḡin coirce aige ar ḡrom capaill. Do cuaiḡ ré eacḡrpa ir coḡram ré ar a céile iad. Buail ḡear cuige tḡearna ir do ḡiaḡraig ré de cad é ḡác na bḡuighe, ir níor deir ḡear an capaill aon bláirpe amáim aḡt teacḡ ar an mbḡaiḡlín agur i ḡḡaoileḡo ir ḡac uile pḡoc ríam de'n mḡin coirce do leigint leir an obainn de ḡruim an ḡroicḡo. Bain ré cúpla cḡoḡa ar an mbḡaiḡlín, cum ná ḡanḡaḡ puinn de'n mḡin coirce uirḡe. Bí mo ḡiḡeaḡóir ag ḡeaḡaint ar an obair ḡo leir, ir níor coḡruig ré ar an áit ḡo paib ré 'na ḡearam air ḡeaḡ na haimḡipe.

"A' bḡeiceann tú an bḡaiḡlín rin?" arḡa ḡear an capaill.

"Cím ḡo dian mḡaḡ," arḡ an ḡear eile.

"Níor bḡiú a bḡuḡ de mḡin coirce ar an mbḡaiḡlín rin an cár ó cúir deirpe. Dá mbḡaḡ ciall aca, níor ḡábaḡ dóib a leicḡo do beir amlaḡo," arḡa ḡear an capaill.

## MONOTYPE

ABCDEFGHIJLMNOPRSTU AḡGJKQVWXYZ

ÁBĊDÉĔĖĖÍMÓPŠŤÚ

abcdeḡghilmnoprrtu dijkqvwxyz

ábċdēĕĝimópřťú

.,;:-'!?-01—



Generally the thin strokes were all to be strengthened and the top bars of Cap. T and G were to be strengthened also.

The Cap A had been objected to by a few of his friends so O'Lochlainn submitted an alternative design which was nearer to the A already in use with a curved inner member. He also recommended that G should be forced to rest on the base-line and not descend. Both of these alternatives can be seen in Trial Sheet No. 6.<sup>41</sup> Morison preferred the original 'G' descending and in fact this version appears on the first showing of the face in the Index to Gaelic Journal. The forked of 'Greek' Cap. A. also appears in the Index to the Journal. The alternative A was reserved for the smaller body sizes. Lower case d has its top stroke lower down apparently this still too high as it is brought further down in the final version but not as uniformly thick as recommended earlier. It also received a slight horn on the right because it had been criticised for being too much like the O.

In 1939 work was started on the italic companion to the IOpt. If we look at trial sheet No. 2<sup>42</sup> for the IOpt Gaelic and Italic we can see that to the roman lower case was added f,g,r,s,t, and the roman forms of A and T were added to the upper case. This now made it suitable for printing in any language.

The italic retains the inscriptional character more than the upright but it follows scribal tradition only in its slope. The proportions are altered quite dramatically from the upright, the letters n,u and h being very narrow sorts compared with the a,d, and e.

If we look at a page from Mo Dhá Róisín by Máire,<sup>43</sup> we can see the new versatility given to the Irish by the addition of a corresponding italic and is completely in character with the rest of the page. The bi-lingual glossary from the back of this book shows how the addition of alternative forms of the letters gives a uniformity to the setting of Irish and English side by side. Up until then this had been a hit or miss situation depending on a suitable Roman to compliment the Irish letter. The Colum Cille Italic is an improvement, however it is not without faults. It was designed



# ΤΑΞΙΔΙΑ

- 1—Ceann Dubhann na nouicéann bán, C.D. of the white sandhills. Dumac, f., gen. eumáca. Dublaídeacé deimhíó, dead of winter. Maribán Samíaríó, extreme stillness of summer. Pannaríó, f., gen. pannacé, a headland. Beann, f., gen. benne, a cliff. Fíon-éann, extreme end. Bunáor, m., greater part. Caríbreíneacé, ghost stories, etc. Cpónaríó, funeral seen in a vision. Car, f., gen. cairé, a wraith.
- 2—Sgáice, verb adj. of ígacím, I separate or isolate. San teac ná cívó pá míle ól, neither house nor hovel within a mile of it. Díall, a jaw, here means gable. Scacán, anything standing absolutely motionless. Éacóp cú 'l léat, between you and the clear sky, on the horizon. Sgealpaíca, pl. of ígcalp, f., gen. ígcalpaíge, a cleft or crevice. Siorpnaíge, dat. of íorpnaíca, f., a whispering sound. Dubéagán na h-oióce, dead of night. Bí íí oíca an íoígarí, they were extremely afraid. Ní íoícaríó óó beic í n-a ípéís, it could not possibly be a lie. Fapíe, f., a wake. Caor ós, the young people. The í prefixed by article has become incorporated in this word. Apó-ípnóna, the early part of the evening. Ígearíó íoí íeacín beag 'í an ímíne, there would be a slight lull in the play. Níor í'eagal oabéca ío mbeííí íoíno oíca, there was no fear of their being taken unawares. Dá méao 'í bí íé í n-a íceann, so anxious were they.

- 3—Uallacé, easily frightened. A beag oabéca, near them. Tá amíne óe beag óó aíge, is said of a near-sighted person. Sgeacéó, m., a little blow. Leamíca, m., a smile. Cocamál, shy; cocúíóó, m., shyness. Moll, m., a heap, is seldom inflected in gen. Mollícat is used as pl.
- 4—Sean-bean náe páb eul ag coonune a h-aíne, an old woman whom no one was able to recognise. Oileamám, verb n. of oílm, I nurse. Caípán, a little boy or girl. A h-anál í mbarí a íoíb léíce, she was almost breathless. Ó íópía í n-aíe na íaríóíca í, since she happened to be where she could oblige me. Lurcan, m., gen. íd., weeds. A íóíca ím, just like that. Here it means that exactly as happened to the others who saw the strange woman, "Máípe" failed to recognise her. Bean a bí ímí í n-a íarí méíoe agur meabácam, she was a woman of average physique. Aíaríó a í' íeapíarí beic íoííeamál, a face that might have been good-looking. Féacám in Ulster means "I may," not "I can," as in other provinces. Le ímí an éíoíb íuíb, on account of the black costume. Le ímí often has this meaning in the Dosses.
- 5—Seímaníoe, mild. Míccál, verb. n. of mócaígm, which often takes the place of clumm in Cíir Coaíll. Leabíca íomíaríca, pl. of leabíó íomíaríca, a rowlock. Éagícam íoí-ííííííeac an íeípa, the gentle moan of the (harbour) bar. Cuacáca, v. oíí, of cuacám, I roll up. Here it means "cooped up." Ío íoíííííí, stealthily. Íloím íóíl, a hollow or deep-sounding boy or yell.



for bi-lingual use but it composes better in Irish than in English. The Roman Italic g is not satisfactory. Furthermore there are some inconsistencies in the setting of the bi-lingual glosaery. For example the abbreviation gen. is sometimes set with an Irish g and elsewhere with a Roman g. Similarly the Irish lower case d can be seen in the English word 'sighted' in the Glossary for Chapter 3. This could happen very easily at the keyboard, when the type setter is faced with alternative versions of letters on the one matrix. These inconsistencies, although minor, do jar the reader, and would not have occurred if a regular Roman italic was used for the English. The Colum Cille italic may have inconsistencies in proportion and some design weakness but it is still a step forward in terms of the appearance of Irish in print.

Trial No. 2

14-6-39

"MONOTYPE"

Colum Cille

Series No. 121—10 point

10 Set Composition

Line .1334

Keybar Frames 3777, 3778 London Order E1433 & E1438

Séo éum a céile iao agur an beirt ag fáruasá na n-uán. Domhnall ag iarraio iao do baint de agur Seágan ná leograsá leir iao. Inr an fáruasá dóib i gairio gur éuasar i fghónaóib a céile, agur im bora plannasá a céile go teit leir na dóirne. I gairio go raib loáin fola air fuais an bóair. Ní raib ouine i gcúram na n-uán i gcuireasá an éim fuar síob. Gaib fear anuas ó'n muileann agur braitlín lán de mhín éirce aige ar érom capaill. Do éuasá ré eatorra i gcuirín ré ar a céile iao. Buail fear éirce cearna i do fíarraig ré de cas é fáe na braitlín, i n-éim fear an écapaill aon blúiré amáin aéc teacá ar an mbraitlín agur i fghóileá i gac uile póc riath de'n mhín éirce do leigint leir an obair de éruim an éroicé. Bain ré cúpla croca ar an mbraitlín, éum ná fongasá puinn de'n mhín éirce uiré. Bí mo fígeasáir ag féacaint ar an obair go léir, i n-éim éorruig ré ar an áit go raib ré 'na fearaí air fead na haimíre.

"A' bfeiceann tú an braitlín rin?" arfa fear an écapaill.

"Cím go dian maí," arf an fear eile.

"Níor bfuá o bfuil de mhín éirce ar an mbraitlín rin an cár ó éirí veirce. Dá mbéad ciall aca, níor fgháas dóib a leicéio do beir amáio," arfa fear an écapaill.

ABCDEFGHIJLMNOPRSTU ATGJKQVWXYZ

ΔBCDEFGIMOPSTU ΛΑΔ

abcdefghilmnoprrtu dfgijkqrstvwxyz

άβςδςέξίμόρρτς

ABCDEFGHIJLMNOPRSTU ATGJKQVWXYZ

ΔBCDEFGIMOPSTU Αγ

abcdefghilmnoprrtu dfgijkqrstvwxyz

άβςδςέξίμόρρτς

£1234567890 ..:-!?"-07-

Tá an scríbhinn seo go díreach mar fuair mé i ó láimh an údair aic amáin go bfuil an mórúid fágta ar lár de deascaib casba spáis agus rós de deascaib a raib innci de tráctas ar neite naic bfuil oiriúnaic. Beid a deic oiread eile le fáil go ré, mar sin féin, má's amháid a bíonn aon glaoic ag an bpobal ar an leabhrán so.

Tuigtear go soiléir gur i leic Chorca Dorca amáin aon ní atá luaic ann agus ná cuigtear go bfuilcear ag cráic go foirleatán ar na Gaeltaicai go mór; áic fá leic innci féin sead Corca Dorca agus daoine gan a gcó-macastúil a niaicann ann.

Liam Miller's Cló Nua-Rómhánach, a Times New Roman

#### *ADVISORY SERVICES*

The Advisory Services Section of the Fisheries Development Division expanded its activities during the year. Port skipper courses, which have been operating very successfully over the past few years, were continued in 1971 at Ballycotton, Kilmore Quay, North Mayo, Carratigue and Greencastle resulting in 21 fishermen qualifying for Skippers' Tickets. In addition, 11 fishermen successfully completed a skippers' training programme at the Irish Nautical College in Dun Laoghaire while a further 6 obtained their Certificates of Competency from the residential course organised by Fisheries Division of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in Galway. A programme of

#### *Bonneagar agus Seirbhísi*

Sínfodh conradh leis an Decca Navigator Co. Ltd., chun Slabhra Loingseoireachta Decca a fheistiú. Leis an Slabhra sin, arb éard a bheidh ann máistir-stáisiúin i nGaillimh agus trí fostáisiúin i nDún na nGall, i gCiarraigh agus i bPort Láirge, beifear in ann eolas cruinn ar láthair an éisc a thabhairt do na báid sna bráití éisc feadh an chósta thiar, thiar-thuaidh agus theas. Tugadh chun críche an gnó a bhain le fáil na talún ba ghá le haghaidh na gceithre stáisiún tarchuradóireachta, ullmhafodh na sonraíochtaí agus rinneadh na conarthaí chun na stáisiúin a thógáil mar aon leis an obair innealtóireachta sibhialta a bhain leis.



## IRISH TYPE SINCE COLUM CILLE:

Due to the gradual phasing out of the Irish Character in the fifties and sixties mainly due to government publications in Irish adopting the Roman letter, Colum Cille and similar faces have become redundant. They appear usually in only specialised circumstances mainly as display faces, very rarely in continuous text.

The vowels are still accented in the Roman but the aspirate dot has disappeared. The letter h is used instead to effect the sound of the preceding consonant. Liam Millars Cló Nua-Romanach<sup>43</sup> was an attempt to marry these Irish characteristics with the Roman. The aspirate dot remained as did the Irish t and f in the lower case. However, this type was used in only one book.

The trouble with adopting Roman forms is that they have a totally different appearance in Irish than in English. This is due mainly to different character frequency and letter groups which do not occur in English, to quote from 'Language and Readability':-

'Identical typefaces have totally different effects in an English or French text.... We can see from the various Monotype Roman typefaces that not every typeface brings out properly and characteristically the rhythm of a given language, nor offers the best and most readable visual picture of the text.'

A page of Irish set in Roman can look spotty because of the frequency of a and g. Some modern fonts have alternative scholastic round forms<sup>44</sup> of these letters and a few designers in the past have set continuous text using these substitute forms giving Irish some of the appearance it had in Colum Cille and Petries type.

Italic type seems to suit the Irish language. This is probably due to the scribal heritage of Irish. Research has shown through, that Italic type is less legible than Roman although design considerations such as type weight, spacing and page layout can be manipulated to correct this. to some degree.



GRADAM DON DOCTÚIR MARCUS Ó RIAIN

Iarrtar de comaoim ort beic i látair i dTig  
Árd-Méire Baile Áta Chas, Dia Máirt, an  
3ad lá de Mí na Márta, 1936, ar a 4.30  
tráthóna, nuair a bponnfar ar an Dr.

Marcur Ó Riain a pictiúr féin.

atá tar éir a tarraingte

le Léo Ó Faoláin,

R. H. A.

Your attendance is requested at the presentation to Dr. Mark Ryan of his portrait  
by Leo Whelan, R.H.A., which will take place in the Mansion House, Dublin  
(by kind permission of the Lord Mayor) on Tuesday, 3rd March, 1936 at 4.30 p.m.

## CONCLUSION:

To sum up, the most successful interpretations of the Gaelic alphabet in print were Petries type and Colum Cille Gaelic. Having said that, it seems highly unlikely that the Gaelic letters will ever again be revived for continuous text, as the printing of the Irish language in Roman letters is so well established at this stage.

The letterpress technology which produced a typeface like Colum Cille has since given way to offset-lithographic printing, in most commercial situations. Litho printing became more sophisticated with the advent of photo-typesetting and more recently digital-typesetting. Types need no longer be cast in metal but can be generated on visual display units and stored in digital form on magnetic disc. Letters which are digitized do not have a physical body so the character fit may be as tight as desired. Kerning is no longer a problem.

The number of characters on a typical font in the Liontron 606 (a digital phototypesetter) is between 100 and 130 so there is plenty of room for alternative characters and sorts.

The only alternative letters needed for printing Irish in Roman letter, are the accented vowels. One possibility for giving Irish back some of the distinction it had in print, would be to design ligatures for all the aspirated consonants. There would be eighteen in all; nine letters combined with the letter h for both upper and lower case. The old aspirate dot, which served the same function as the h, was very economical. The ligatures could never be as economical but nevertheless could become an identifiable feature of the language.

Whether design changes such as these would be accepted or not is difficult to say but there can be no doubt that the appearance of the printed word, in any language, will be fashioned by any new developments in technology.



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