

**The Development of
Romanesque Architecture and
Hand Knitting in Ireland**

Mairead McCann

NC 0019915 X



TGGI

M0055800NC

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE AND HAND KNITTING IN IRELAND

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN

-and-

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE

B. DES IN FASHION DESIGN:-

-BY-

MAIREAD McCANN

FASHION DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF FASHION AND TEXTILE DESIGN

CONTENTS:-

INTRODUCTION:-

CHAPTER ONE:-

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF IRISH ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRISH ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE.

CHAPTER TWO:-

CONCEPT OF KNIT.

KNITTING MADONNAS.

TRADITIONAL ARAN.

KNITWEAR DESIGNERS.

CONCLUSION

P (IN TEXT) = PLATE NUMBER

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The architecture of any age is a direct reflection of the society which produced it. Thus in an attempt to realise in the context of Ireland how the development of a particular style evolved according to its circumstance and thus become acquainted with the character of the Irish people whose character the present generation must have to a great extent, inherited it is natural to consider the most original and truly national of Irish Architectural achievements. This is the period known as Irish Romanesque and it happened in the eleventh and twelfth centuries approximately.

The architecture of the Romanesque period was the product of everything which preceded it, as well as the spirit of its own age. So the first consideration in the history of this architecture is the history of everything preceding this period which directly affected its development.

Design and architecture grew up hand in hand in Ireland. Therefore it is obvious how the Irish people were able to translate the impeccable work of architecture on knitwear developed an atmosphere of mystic culture, in which the interest is in the working of the yarns, colour and design.

Knitwear has been the subject of an enormous amount of interest over the past decade. This recognition has come from the press and public alike, and the knitwear industry has been highly praised in recent times by both groups. The popularity of knitwear coming out of the eighties into the ninties now has not been equalled since the early years of this century. There are many different reasons for the booming knitwear industry. One main factor which I believe in, is the environmental report, which states that everyone should, "clean up our act". Therefore customers do not want to purchase clothes made of leather and fur as an example because animals had to be killed for the sake of fashion. Whereas with knitwear the garments are all made from natural fibre so the increase in sales has rocketed in the late eighies and early ninties.

I intend to discuss, the historical background and development of Irish Romanesque Architecture. I feel that this period was the backbone for new, exiting, and innovative knitwear designers.

I shall give an account of some paintings from a later period which show knitting Madonnas in architectural surroundings. These particular paintings have become enormously popular over

the centuries and they fascinate me.

This thesis also incorporates an account of Aran Knitwear and some designers which have played a major part in the revitalization of the knitwear industry.

CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF IRISH ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRISH ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

THE PEOPLE;-

There was naturally a considerable variety of temperament among the Irish people in early Christian Ireland. There are however some general characteristics which may be attributed to the people as a whole;- Impetuosity, quarrelsomeness, headstrong pride, generosity, love of nature and a powerful sense of kinship and family. There were some features of the character of the people that should be regarded as innately Irish, especially the love of intricacy of pattern in thought, literature and art and the love of categories and classifications in thought which seems almost to have been a vice of learned classes.

The Irish were, and still are, one of the most conservative of peoples, not unreceptive to new ideas, but with a considerable facility for slowly absorbing the new into the old avoiding sudden dramatic change. Their memories were strong and they were capable of reverting to the methods of the past if the methods of the present were providing unsuccessful.

Early Christian Ireland was not civilized in the way that Roman Civilization was, but neither was it barbaric or savage. No towns or cities or even villages existed until the vikings came in 795 A.D. the primary unit of society was the family which was made up of all relatives in the male line as far as the second cousin. A number of such family groups made up the Tyath Tribe and there were about one Hundred of these in Ireland divided into seven overkingdoms which in turn came under the general sovereignty of Cashel in the South, of Tara in the North. There were three main social classes. The Land owning aristocracy, the seifs and the Aes Dana (i.e. poets, historians, physicians and skilled craftsmen). Aes Dana were largely responsible for the unity of culture in Ireland. The Irish took a number of Roman ideas and adapted them for themselves e.g. letters learning the science of times etc., and eventually Ireland became culturally a province of Europe with strong relations with the Roman Empire but without having been subject to the conquering Roman Armies.

THE HISTORY;-

The story of early Christian Ireland is more or less the story of how the unsubdued Celtic community accepted, adapted and reacted to the Mediterranean culture. The arrival of peaceful missionaries in the fifth century marks the real beginning of this process although before this the Irish had made contact with the Roman world (which at this time included Britain) through trade and also by way of raids carried out.

Thus in Fifth Century there was a beginning of a revival in Celtic Art which had produced nothing since the Roman invasion of Britain and in the First Century A.D. this revival began with metalwork. With the decline of the the Roman Empire raids on the Roman world increased and booty was brought home in the form of brooches, ornaments, jewelery etc. The effect of this Roman Art combined with the splendid curvilinear abstract art which existed in Britain and Ireland was that metalwork in the West received a powerful stimulus. Decorations of the time on horse bits, sword scabbards etc. consisted of incised curvilinear ornament of the S shape or scroll forms, highly stylized palmettes, small tightly coiled "hairspring spirals" and basketry hatching.

The inspiration of this art were largely in Britain but it was developed in Ireland which lay beyond the reach of the Saxon invaders. The forms of this art were elegant and lively but it did not become really versatile until it came into the service of the most vigorous institution of the age - The Church.

THE MONASTERIES;-

In the Sixth Century there took place on the continent a Christian reaction against Rome. Christians had become weary of the delights and fearful of the temptations of the rich cities and began to flock in numbers to more barren deserted areas in order to seek solitude and spiritual perfection and practise penance and fasting. Thus there were christians coming to Ireland and setting up monasteries which fitted in well with the social set up where the family was still the main social unit. The monastery was like a family with an abbot at the head instead of the king. By the end of the Sixth Century the Irish Church was a church of monks who valued letters and learning and who sent missionaries abroad. The monastery was the nearest thing to a town that existed in early christian Ireland.

The early churches in the early monasteries were mostly wooden and although they have no architectural significance, as Leask

says;-

"They have a special interest; they were evolved - unlike those of Western Europe of the same period, in almost entire independance of Roman Tradition and building"^{ref.}

By the time the Seventh Century was well advanced, the monasteries had grown in size and wealth and in response to the demand for more liturgical vessels, reliquaries, gospel books fit to grace the alter, a mature and masterly art style, based on excellent craftsmanship in both painting, metal work and stone carving came into being. At the beginning of the seventh century ornament was comparatively simple, consisting of scrolls, spirals, whorl designs etc. By the mid eighth century this had developed to use animal interlacing, birds and human figures.

One of the strangest phenomena to appear in Irish Art at this time was the appearance of stone crosses. These are a particular interest in Chapter two, as to the source used by knitwear designers in their creations. Crosses had been made in timber and because of the strain caused at the point where the two shafts of the cross interlock supports had to be added. For Aesthetic reasons these supports were given the form of quadrants of a circle. It was a custom of the time for these wooden crosses to have a covering of ornamental metal work. The strange thing was how the sculptures of the day copied the fine patterns of the metal workers into stone replicas of the wooden crosses.

The book of Kells was another artistic product of the eighth century, which proved the competence of Irish artists in any medium they cared to choose thus by the eighth century although Ireland was still not civilized, the country had achieved its first expression of life and culture.

At the end of the ninth century and during this period the art of the celtic crosses progressed rapidly. Carvings representing scenes from the Bible progressed but interlacing and animal ornament were playing a much greater part in the decoration. These were the "scriptured Crosses". Their sculpture is in a system and they are the first signs of Romanesque Art in Ireland. The finest example of a developed Scriptural type High Cross is the cross of Muiredach (see P 1).

By now the term Romanesque has been used and it is important to define what the word means and why it plays a great importance in the structured details of knitwear which will be seen in Chapter two. Romanesque in its architectural application refers to a

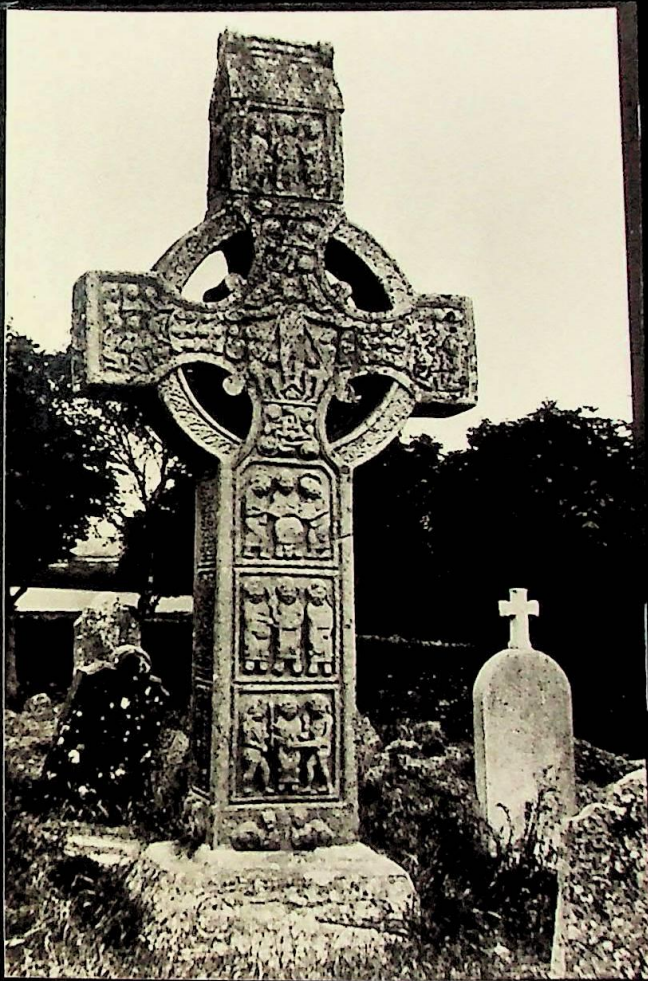


PLATE 1

Cross of Muiredach
Monaster Boice

style of architecture which lies between Roman Architecture and Gothic architecture . Romanesque Architecture produced buildings with a new attitude to organization of plan, which were strong, solid, definite, logical and yet mystical.

Romanesque naturally took on a different role as it integrated with the existing styles. In Ireland the term Romanesque is used as H.G. Leask says "In respect only of architecture embellished with carved ornaments".

With the wars and raids at an end in Ireland in the Eleventh Century, interest in art was revived and the Irish artists took up their tools where they had left them down in the eighth century. The Irish traditional art whose mark had always been finely interwoven decoration of various themes from various sources, whether in metalwork, bookwork or stone was revived. With the revival of art and relative peace in the country foreign students and clerics began to frequent Ireland. With, first of all the rebuilding of the monasteries and secondly the wave of the new churches due to church reform, there was plenty of scope provided for the imagination of the architects, masons and craftsmen who were influenced by the foreigners and by Irish Traditions to provide something original.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRISH ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE

It is generally agreed upon by all those who are renowned for their knowledge of the matter that the first attempts at ornamental elaboration on structural elements took place at the end of the eleventh century.

The first step towards accepting the structural achievements of Romanesque in Ireland, i.e. the use of the round arch replacing the lintel at the head of the doors and windows, took the form of a series of doors constructed using a lintel on the outside face and a round arch on the inside face spanning from jamb to jamb. The west door of the church at Banagher in County Derry is the plainest example of this type of door. The lintel used is 6 feet in length and a bold plain architrave is also used. In the south wall of the church is a window of the same date as the doorway (p.2) There is a similar door at Aghowle, County Wicklow (p.3.) and at Maghera (P4) . There is another but on this example there is so much decoration on the stonework, particularly the lintel, that it would seem to be an extremely advanced example of decoration for this early type of structure or else it is a doorway constructed at a much later date than Aghowle or Banagher, using the more primitive type of support.

PLATE 2

Windows in the ruined Church
Banagher, County Derry.



PLATE 3

West door in ruined church
Aghowle, County Wicklow





PLATE 4

Lintel above doorway
Maghera, County Derry.

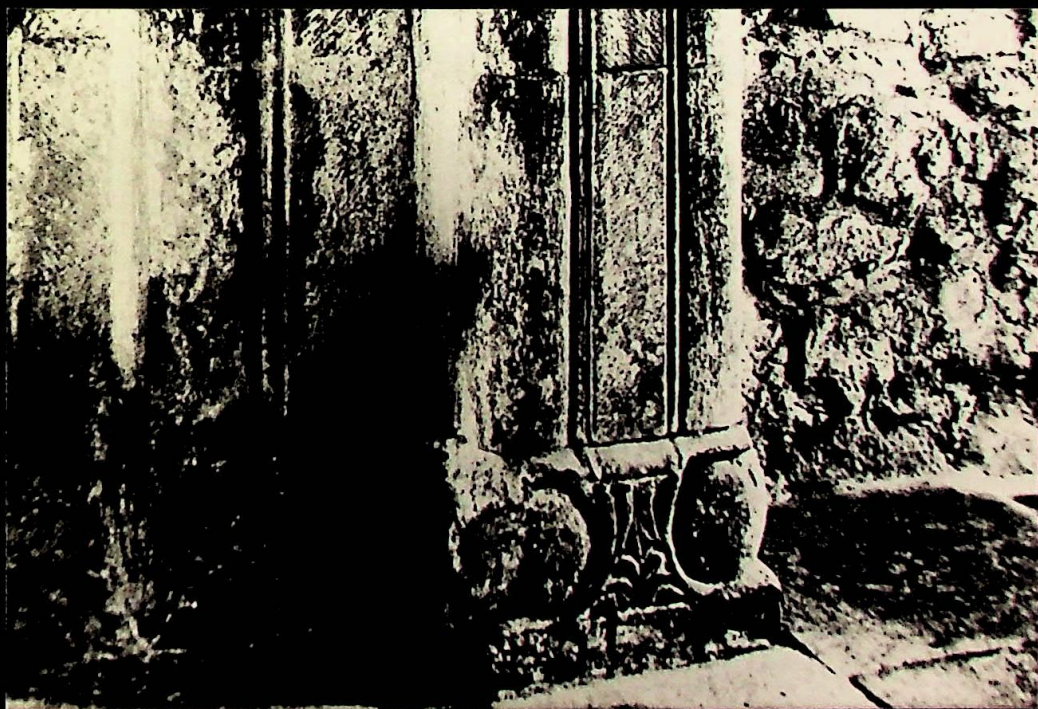


PLATE 5

Pier of Chancel Arch,
Rahan, County Offaly.

The first signs of decoration on Romanesque features appeared on the jambs of the arches, doors and windows. One must note here that the use of defining words like decorative, shapely etc also occur in the construction of garments in knitwear. The relation is intriguing and fascinating between architecture and knitwear.

The chevron is a Romanesque moulding which form a zig - zag , (garther stitch in knitwear resembles this) a decoration taken originally from timber construction. It was the stock ornament of the Romanesque of North West Europe, most popular in Britain, Normandy and Ireland. It is also referred to as the ribbon moulding and it is to be found on arch rings and upon the jambs of doors and arches. The Chevron moulding is extremely popular in Britain and it is most likely that it came to Ireland from Britain and because the dates of its use in Britain are known; a date for its arrival could not be before 1100. It is used throughout the Romanesque period in Ireland.

The Romanesque doorway, with its recessed orders of arches and jambs was copied directly by Irish Masons and from the continental examples and they were satisfied with it to the extent that they never attempted to alter it. So it is purely the ornamental treatment in the decoration of the continental structural ideas that made the Irish Romanesque period different and original.

The foremost example of the earliest days of Romanesque in Ireland is the Chancel Archway of the Church of Rahan in County Offaly. The arch is completely Romanesque in structure. It is in three orders and the arches are square in section and undecorated but the jambs reveal characteristics which were later to prove typical of the Irish Style.

The piers of the arch (p5) are square in plan but sculptured in such a way as to give the impression of a number of colonettes standing on bulbous bases. The spaces between these bulbous bases are filled with low relief carving. The base blocks and capitals project very little but on the capitals at the corners human heads are sculptured and the space between the heads is filled with lightly sculptured patterns of classical leaves (palmettes) (p6). The idea of the heads carved unto the capitals and the pier worked into columns are typical of the Irish Style. Small projections of bases and capitals were also persistent characteristics for most of the period.

Of the monastery at Killeslin, Co. Leix built on the slope of a hill above a wide stretch of countryside, only the west and north

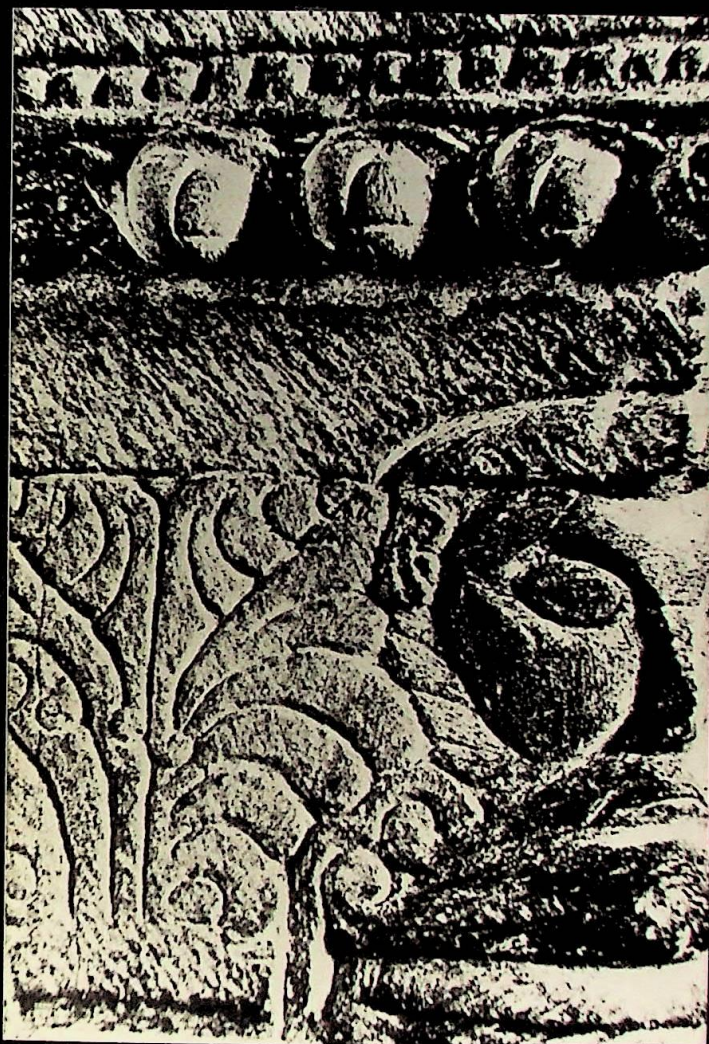


PLATE 6

Capital
Rahan, County Offaly.

walls of the church have survived the inter provincial wars. The development of decoration can be seen in the piers and capitals. The capitals have the heads carved on the angles and the elaborate interlaced decorations between them are outstanding (p 7 & 8). Three of the four arches have been treated with different variations of the Chevron moulding and the soffit of the first order is decorated with Greek Crosses (P9). A steep pediment rises over the arch and this is a feature which was to become popular.

In the Twelfth Century during repairs the door in the Gable wall of the Cathedral was rebuilt in the Romanesque Style and other stone churches were erected to replace older churches; - Temple Finhin (P10) Temple Kelly and the Nun's Church (p11).

CORMAC'S CHAPEL

Cormac Mac Cartaigh, ally of St. Malachy in the move for church reform in the eleventh and twelfth centuries returned to Cashel in 1127 when he became king of Munster and began work on a chapel on the rock, as a gesture similar to the one made by Muirceartach Ua Briain who granted the site to the church in 1101.

This chapel, referred to generally as Cormac's chapel is one of the most remarkable buildings in the history of Irish Architecture. It was only natural that a building born out of a reform movement which was designed to bring the Irish Church into line with the Continental ideas, should look to foreign fields for inspiration in design.

The result was a chapel - completed in 1134, whose character, unlike all previous churches, was completely Romanesque, not only in the context of Ireland where the term Romanesque does not relate a great deal to the architecture on the continent. (?)

The chapel consists of a rectangular nave and rectangular chancel. The nave is flanked at its east end by two towers, the south tower being a belfry, the north tower a treasury. The side walls of the nave are nowhere less than 3' in thickness and these bear the massive round vault with the support of heavy undecorated arch ribs which rise from small half columns which rest upon the arcade of the lower part of the wall (p12). The interior is poorly lit due to the building up of two windows in the west wall in the eighteenth century.

The entrance to the chapel is the dramatic north doorway. Here the thickness of the walls is increased to create a tunnel like an archway with a double door, each doorway having three orders



PLATE 7

Detail of door
Killeshin, County Leix.



PLATE 8

Detail of door
Killeshin, County Leix.



PLATE 9

Detail of Arch of Doorway

Λ

PLATE 10

Temple Finghin
Choir and Tower
Clonmacnoise, County Offaly.



PLATE 11

Nun's Church
Clonmacnoise, County Offaly.



PLATE 12

Vault of Nave
Cormac's Chapel

of pier and arch. The outer arch supports a carved semi-circular tympanum, decorated with a carved lion, whose origin according to Liam do Paor lies in early english and continental cluniac manuscript illumination. (p13) The only other trace of a carved tympanum in Ireland is that of Donoghmore which is now almost completely destroyed.

Above the portal is a wide steep gable ornamented with running chevrons (p14) in describing the gable H.G. Leask has said.

"the likeness to a framed timber structure, with large boards, collar - tie and upright posts is so exact as to make it obvious that the whole is a translation into stone of a large timber framed gable of a kind to be found in Germany even in late Medieval times".

The rosettes which also decorate the gable are also derived from plaster decoration typical of eleventh century Germany.

THE EFFECT OF CORMAC'S CHAPEL

One of the reasons why Cormac's Chapel is so remarkable is because it is so alone. The building had a certain immediate effect on Irish Architecture and there are many examples of individual features of Cormac's Chapel being copied elsewhere. But after Cormac's Chapel the spirit of Romanesque Architecture which lived in the continent and in England died in Ireland; The Irish masons soon lost sight of, or misunderstood most the architectural features and soon resorted to concentrating on elaborating ornamentation.

The most direct descendant of Cormac's Chapel is the Church at Kilmalkedar, County Kerry. It consists of a nave and a chancel which was added at a later date. Both are rectangular in plan. The blank (reading) most obvious in Cormac's Chapel is reflected here. The walls on each side of the nave are divided into six bays by half-round columns rising from bases on a narrow shelf. The upper interior of the nave is almost an exact replica of Cashel. The roof, although now in ruins, was once a barrel vault. There is a round arch to the altar recess of two orders and the Chevron ornament on both faces of the inner order with lozenges on the soffit, is identical to the decoration on the North porch at Cashel. The deeply carved colonettes is carried on and the capitals are scalloped. The roof is, as in Cashel, an Irish Stone roof and whereas the walls in Cashel, are straight, the tradition of battering is applied at Kilmalkedar and the jambs of all the openings are splayed to correspond. The arris



PLATE 13

Tympanum of doorway
Cormac's Chapel



PLATE 14

Detail of Portal
Cormac's Chapel.

chevron, outlined by roll and bead mouldings occur again and the west doorway supports a tympanum although it is uncarved.

Part of the original west front of the cathedral at Ardfert, the doorway in the west wall, is derived from Cashel. Like Cashel and Kilmalkedar, there are Chevron mouldings on both faces of the inner arch and the lozenge design on the soffit. The piers are deeply wrought into three columns with cushioned and scalloped capitals carrying the arch - the billet moulding is used on the abaci and the wall is arcaded to the right, and left of the doorway the arches being decorated with the Chevron moulding.

The front facade of St. Cronan's Church at Roscrea, County Tipperary (p15) has a central doorway flanked on each side by blank wall arcading- The doorway and the arches have high tangent gables similar to the north portal at Cashel and decorated in similar fashion (p16)

These churches are only examples whose make up contains sufficient evidence to suggest that they are direct descendants of Cormac's Chapel.

It therefore seems evident, that as time went on jambs of doorways were eventually invaded by the decoration of the style. The decoration which had begun on the base and capitals of the piers had slowly invaded the arches, and finally the columns, and so it would seem that at this point the invasion of members by decoration had reached its destination, which took the form of the doorway of St. Brendan's Cathedral in Clonfert, County Galway.

CLONFERT DOORWAY;

This is a most unusual portal (p17) It is the largest of the period in Ireland though not on a continental or English scale, built of red sandstone, the jambs consist of five orders of engaged columns and broad outer pilasters which support five orders of arch, the high pitched pediment and a hood moulding. The pediment is filled with a layer of arcading and above this a surface decoration fills the rest of the pediment composed of a small repeated triangular pattern bordered by a double roll which terminate into a conical shape at the apex, flanked with human masks. The jambs are very definitely battered. The entire item is covered with decoration except for the blank arcading of the pediment and the spandrels below it. The capitals have various different animals on them (p18) and the fascias above them are decorated with a foliage scroll. The seven semicircular arch

PLATE 15

Facade of Church
Roscrea, County Tipperary.

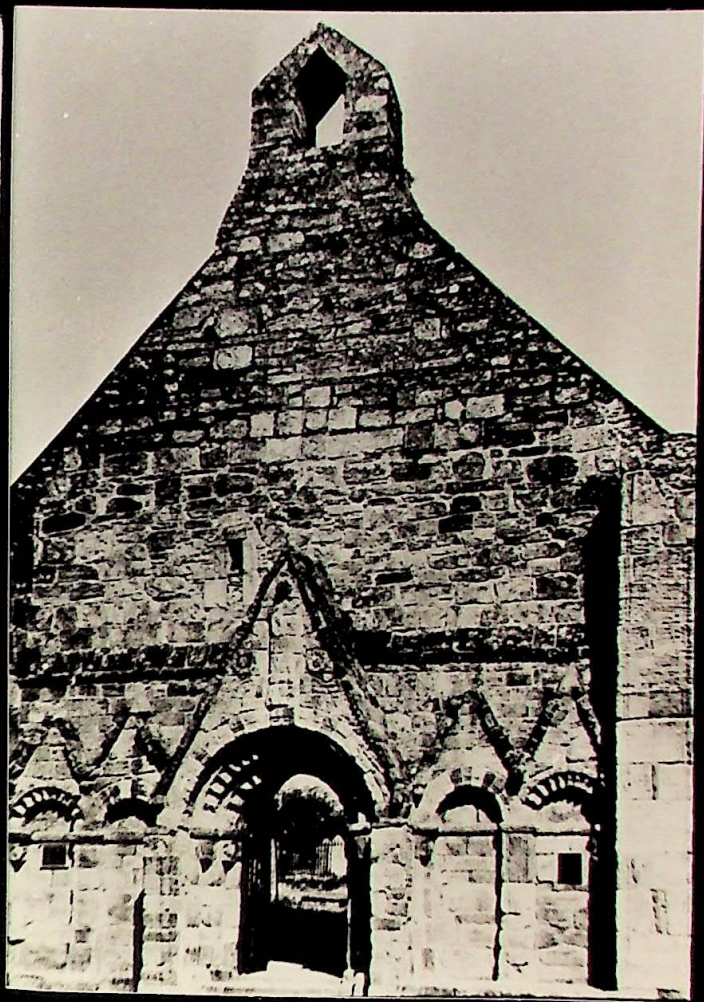
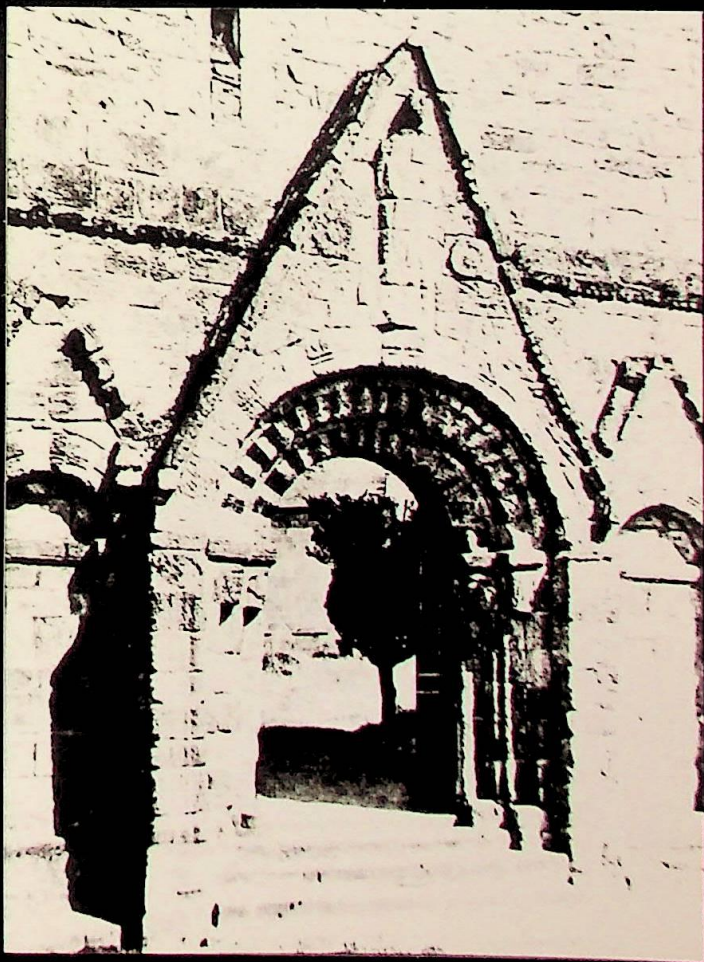


PLATE 16

Portal
Roscrea, County Tipperary.



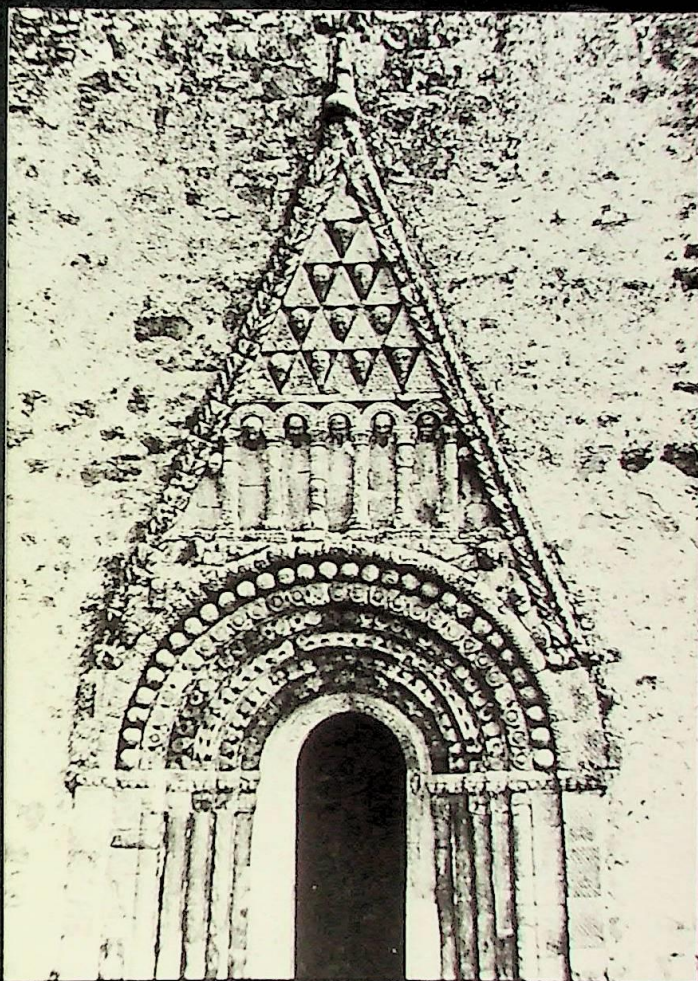


PLATE 17

Portal
Clonfert Cathedral

rings including the hood moulding are deeply wrought and display motifs which do not appear anywhere else in the Irish Style. The hood moulding is decorative with fine interlacing ornament. The next arch is made up of hemispherical ornamental knobs, all of them carved in low relief with the palmette and interlacements and a cable moulding i.e. a moulding which imitates a twisting cord) curving backwards and forwards in horse shoe shapes which are unique in Ireland. The second arch is also decorated with unique characteristics - pateras in pairs on the face and soffit. On the third order are pateras similar to those on the Monaincha doorway. The fourth Order has an animal head on each voussoir (p 19) a feature which later became widely used. Each stone of the innermost arch is carved with a very elegant palmette.

Therefore the Clonfort doorway was not only built for a function but for the architectural detail for this period.

A strong scandinavian influence was developing and one of the most elaborate chancel arches of the more pronounced sculptured type stands in the cathedral of Tuam in Galway. It is the widest Chancel arch mentioned so far and has six orders of arch and five orders of piers. The first order of jambs is square edged then there are three - quarter columns and the inside is formed by a half column. The jambs are clear, the capitals freize like the two inside capital having human heads lightly worked upon them (p 20 & 21) the first few arches were at one time covered with interlacements and foliage patterns in low relief, along with the chevron and roll ornament. The innermost arch is decorated with another variation on the chevron theme (later in Chapter two one can see a Chevron knitting stitch which is very exciting), the points of the chevrons having been worked into loops with a narrow band of leaf ornament up the centre. The Killaloe (Clare) doorway and Tuam Chancel arch would seem to be the utmost in elaborate dramatic decoration of the Romanesque period.

Around 1169 Irish Romanesque came to an end. Other influences began to combine to create a new style which was moving in a different direction towards gothic architecture.

Therefore Irish Romanesque architecture was essential for the development of not only architecture in Ireland, but as we will see in the next chapter, the development of Knitwear.

PLATE 18

Details of Portal
Clonfert Cathedral,
County Galway.



PLATE 19

Details of Portal
Clonfert Cathedral
County Galway.

PLATE 20

Detail of Chancel Arch
Tuam, County Galway.

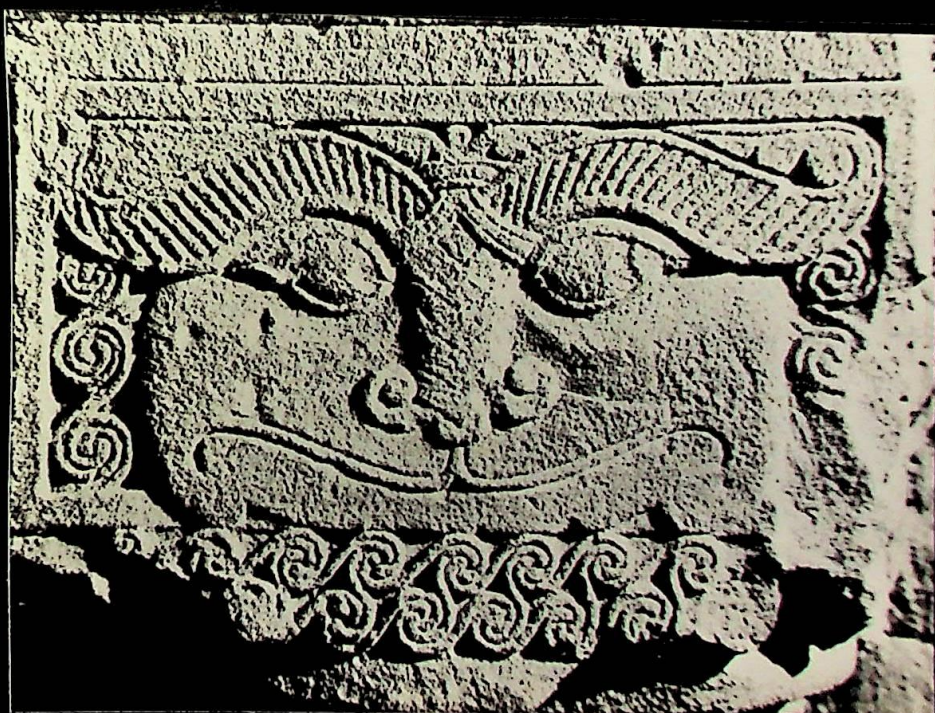


PLATE 21

Detail of Chancel Arch,
Tuam, County Galway.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPT OF KNIT

KNITTING MADONNAS

TRADITIONAL ARAN

KNITWEAR DESIGNERS



PLATE 22

A greek woman knitting with yarn kept in tension through a hook attached at the neck of her clothing, throwing the yarn with her left thumb.

CONCEPT OF KNITTING

Hand Knitting is the most domestic of crafts, and knitted garments have always been designed for practical purposes, tended to be worn until they disintegrated. Thus hand knitting has received relatively little attention from fashion and textile representatives. It is difficult to define knitting unless one compares it to other crafts. Knitting is a skill and a craft and is among one of the world's oldest and most useful forms of self-expression (p. 22). The revival of interest in knitwear is overwhelming. Designers are rediscovering the pleasure of creating something from natural fibres which the fashion person wants to buy.

Just as there is no ancient greek word for knitting, so there has been no accurate Latin word for it, not even in Mediaeval times not until the Renaissance do we find words that mean 'to knit'. At first they are confused words related to, mesh, net or knot were tried.

In modern English the verb to 'knit' still has several meanings - Besides meaning to make a fabric with knitting needles (p23) it means to fuse or to draw together. In middle England the word, often spelt kynntt had broadened its meaning. It still meant 'to tie' in or with a knot. Towards the end of the fifteenth century we find knit used to mean the making of fabric therefore the definition of knitting can be investigated.

It is surprisingly difficult to say what knitting is. The International Standards Organisation has defined many knitting terms, but not knitting itself. The Difficulty springs partly from the necessity to define the structure of knitted fabric rather than the techniques of making it. One must look closely and the word structure used to define what knitting is created for, it is an art - work of well thought stitches fused together to produce an interesting and functional result.

Knitted fabric is a fabric consisting solely of parallel rows of yarn, each row meshed into the fabric by being looped into bights of a row above. Only in the last row are the loops locked by being laterally looped into the same row of knitting lie parallel, in one place. In weaving there are at least two sets of yarn, normally at right angles to each other. The rows of knitting are secured to one another by the bights of the yarn. The yarn of the knitted fabric is not necessarily continuous throughout the piece. Since the yarn can be carried from one row to another, a piece of knitted fabric can be made of a single continuous piece of yarn; A row may also consist of two or more yarn, either to produce a denser fabric or to produce coloured patterns.



PLATE 23

Yarn and Knitting needles.

KNITTING MADONNAS

A particular area in the knitting world which fascinated artists and designers was the paintings of St. Mary Knitting. I feel that it is important to discuss some of the paintings to give an idea of the influences and changes in design.

Art and literature during the fourteenth century became increasingly concerned with the human and emotional elements in the life of Christ. Paintings of the Madonna and child began to appear with imaginative suggestions of the domestic background of the Holy Family. A few paintings show St. Mary knitting, set in architectural surroundings (i.e. Romanesque Structural influences.) Undoubtedly with so much architectural beauty at this time and times before, knitwear designs of craftsmen as they were known then, would have been greatly influenced by architectural design.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, active about 1319 - 1347 painted in Siena with his brother Pietro, Siena in 1348 witnessed the Black Death and both brothers are thought to have died. The knitting Madonna, now in the Abegg collection at Berne, was probably painted at the very end of Ambrogio's life. (p. 24) . It belongs to a style of painting known as Madonna Dell 'Umilta, Madonna of Humility, because it finds no chair, or throne, but a floor with the Blessed Virgin upon it. The interior gives a feeling that the knitting Madonna is comfortable in domestic surroundings. St. Joseph sits at the right hand side of Mary and the little boy Jesus, who sits with one hand on his mother's arm. Mary is knitting in the round with four needles and purple yarn, what she is making is very hard to see. Mary holds the needles under her palm. The yarn is carried over her right forefinger, and yarn of various colours is wound on a dozen or so spools or bobbins. The frame setting in this particular painting is very interesting because it resembles that of the portal in Cormac's Chapel. A wide steep gable ornamented with running chevrons. This is typical from the eleventh century Germany but in the Fourteenth Century the Romanesque influence is shining through, not only in an architectural form, but in the development of ideas for knitwear as one will see later.

Moreover another knitting Madonna is in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan. It is the work of Vitale degli Equi (p 25). This time Mary is shown sitting on a bench covered with red fabric patterned with blue flowers. The garment Mary is wearing is a blue robe, brocaded with gold. Behind the seat is St. Catherine and another woman Martyr. Jesus sits at her left side, putting out his hand to pick up a spool of yarn. Jesus looks at his mother and grasps her free kneedle with his right hand. Mary

PLATE 24

A painting of the Holy Family
attributed to Ambrogio Lorenzetti
of Siena.

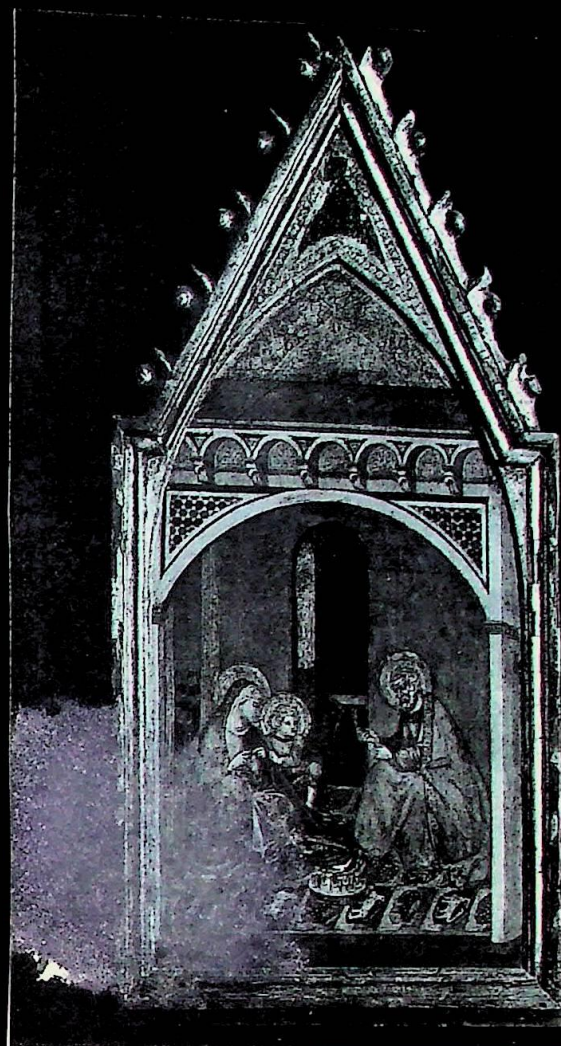


PLATE 25

Madonna of Humility with
St. Catherine and another
Virgin Martyr, by Vitale Degli
Equi.



PLATE 26

Our Lady knitting. Detail of a polyptich by Tommaso Da Modena.



PLATE 27

The Buxtehude Madonna by Master Bertram of Minden, an example of Madonna and child with instruments of the Passion, painted probably shortly before 1400.



holds her knitting in her left hand and with the index finger of the same hand tickles his chin as though coaxing him not to play with the spools. The knitting is on three or four needles and has a floral pattern in two colours, too wide for a stocking, too narrow for a child's vest. It may be a bag like the knitted relic bags of the same period now kept in Switzerland.

Another Italian painter of the same period Tommaso Da Madena (1325 - 1375) has painted a knitting Madonna (p. 26). This picture belongs to one of three panels and this time Mary is seated either in a chair or a throne. In one she is without the child and a book on her knee; In another Mary is suckling him; In the final one Jesus sits in the chair beside Mary as she knits. Again we see Mary knitting on the round with kneedles held under her palms, carrying the light coloured yarn on the right hand. Only a few inches of knitting has been completed, and it is held in front as she works so that we see the work forming a hollow square, slightly rounded. The background setting is again in architectural surroundings is that more attractive to the eye.

Moreover of the best known knitting Madonnas, is one painted by Master Bertram of Minden, probably a little before 1400.

In this picture Mary sits in an architecturally elegant room, knitting a crimson shirt on four needles held out of view. The garment is almost complete. Three balls of yarn is sitting in what seems to be a straw basket beside Mary. There is actually two yarns being used, apparently both carried over her right hand. Jesus sits on the floor this time with an open book and a whip beside him; His head is turned over his shoulder looking at two angels who stand behind him, one carrying three nails and a cross, the other a crown of thorns and a spear. Instruments of Passion, according to biblical writings.

From the early centuries paintings have always captured a rich architectural image in some area of the picture. The decoration and detail within the structure play an extensive role in the influence and development of structural cables (influenced by columns) and other stitches.

Thus the knitting Madonnas show that knitting was known not only in Italy and Germany but surely everywhere. From the paintings there is a suggestion that knitting was done in the round on four kneedles; The working needles were held under the palms of each hand; The yarn was carried on the right hand; More that one yarn could be used. This is the only way other paintings show women off old knitting, until a later century.

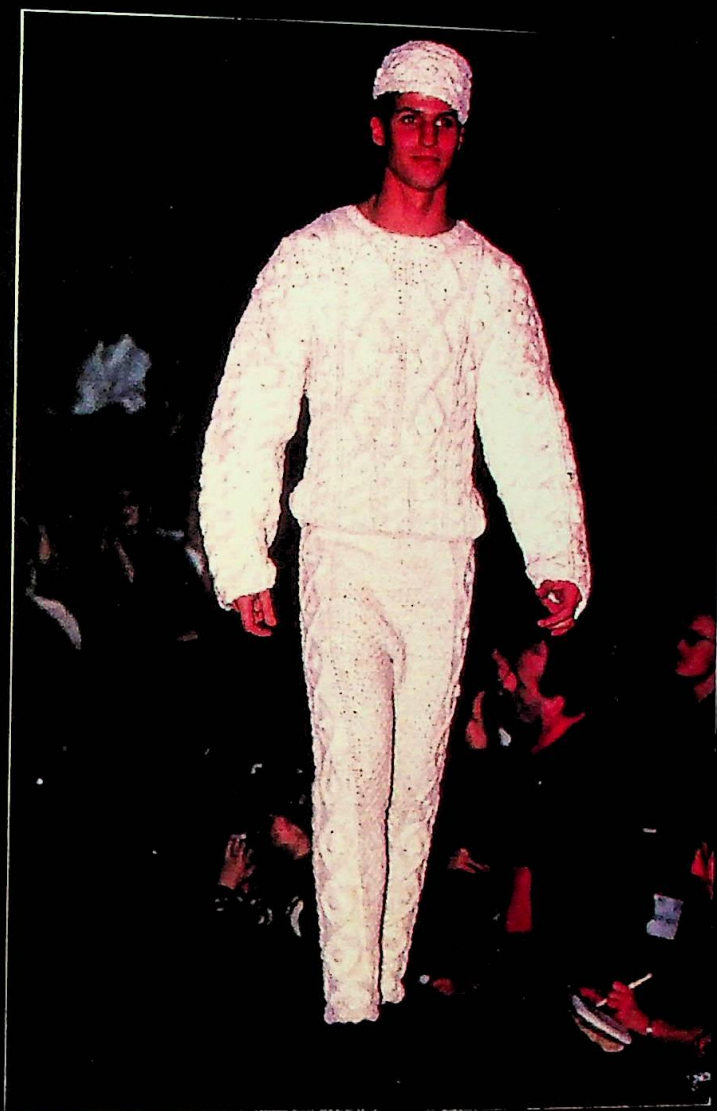


PLATE 32

Aran Style in Outre Fashion
A suit by Jean-Paul Gaultier.

ARAN;-

Fashions recent flirtation with Romanesque architectural style has surfaced in the form of classic columns in knitwear, carved togas and even the occasional heroic breast plate. In keeping with the Irish Romanesque and Regal Gothic Genre, jewellers, knitwear, accessory and home furnishings designers are following the same themes. Many of the pieces and garments have an archaeological feel to them, and some of them really are genuine artefacts rediscovered and reworked for modern appeal and use.

The elusive 'look' for Irish Knitwear steams back to the small stormwashed isles of Aran, the magnificent patterned sweaters and wraps called Aran only help to emancipate the architectural power which the Romanesque attitude had on the the Irish People. Pattern of thought, design and art is always in the Irish blood as we have already seen from Chapter One.

Thus a new interest in knitwear appeared people wanted more comfortable, looser and larger garments. Patterned garments were no longer considered just for fishermen, (p.28) but the Aran Sweater was becoming a new craze.

The three isles of Aran, Inishmore, Inishman and Inishear lie across the mouth of Galway Bay on the Irish Atlantic Coast. The popularity of the Aran Sweater began in 1939 when Britain emerged from Austerity slowly in the post-war years. New patterns were created all with high relief cabling and honeycombing. Vogue knitting published an Aran pattern in 1956. By 1957 they were being worn in America. For interest the old patterns to me were really exciting and almost timeless. (p. 29, 30 & 31). In the 1980 decade Aran sweaters maintained their popularity, and the 'catwalks' yearned for the bold sculptured effects of knitted designs (p. 32).

Heinz Kiewe, who inspired the Aran fashion, was born in Koenigsberg, East Prussia in 1906. Hitler's Germany made many families leave and the Kiewe family settled in England. Fashion was their trade and a shop was opened on Brompton Road and here they made the acquaintance of the fashionable and the famous. Art Needlework Industries Limited was opened in 1940 in Ship Street, here Heinz developed his influence over British Fashion until he died in 1986.

Heinz perceived a connection between Aran knitted designs and ancient Romanesque design. Heinz accepted it was an intuitive

PLATE 28

A fisherman wearing an aran
Sweater.

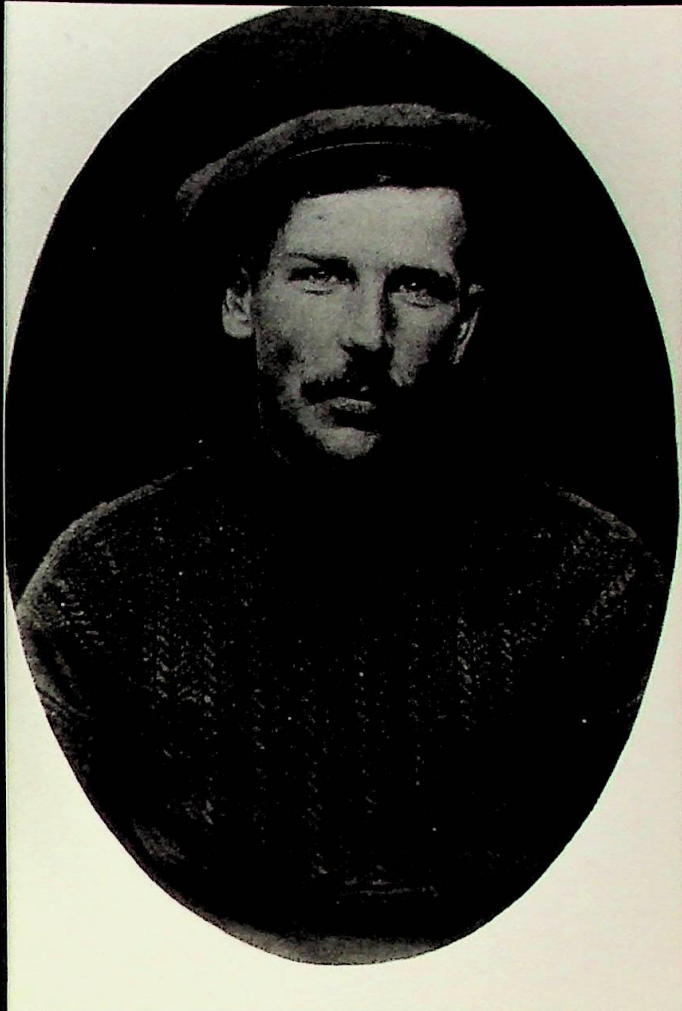


PLATE 29, 30 & 31.

Examples of knitting patterns
from earlier decades.



LADY'S BATHING SUIT

FROM "DIANA" NON-SHRINK KNITTING



N 2763 PATONS & BALDWIN'S HELPS TO KNITTERS PRICE 2⁵⁰

SIRDAR

no. 27
15 199



PLATE 33

Two sweaters using aran stitches with cotton yarn instead of traditional aran wool.



PLATE 34

Typical Aran look using aran wool instead of cotton.



perception. There are many different stories connected with the history of Aran knits, one which is claimed by many scholars is the mystic and monotheistic cultures. It has been found that the figures in the illuminated manuscript of the "Book of Kells" wore Aran garments. Aran knitwear was provided with its own mythology, and the garment-makers and wool-spinners made claims that their patterns originated from the surroundings in a truly romantic and structure environment. The similarities between Aran design and Irish Romanesque architecture are the fundamental similarities of all simple geometric designs. Mystic meanings and evocative names for knitting patterns can grow up and catch on in a surprisingly short time ; similarities between the decorations in the Book of Kells and those of Aran knitwear maybe claimed to be superficial ; but the connections of decorative detail can be seen beautifully in the sweater details and buildings designed.

Marco Riveth stated in a Vogue magazine that for him "fashion does not produce culture but culture produces fashion". This statement sums up the awareness designers have when research for a theme or subject for inspiration for their collections. Therefore without culture, history, art and literature where would find sources. Truly the work of Aran design has developed an atmosphere of romance, in which the interest is in the working of colour and design. Cotton yarn is even being used with Aran stitches (pl. 33) compared to Aran yarn (pl. 34).

Moreover, looking back at the monastery at Killeslin, Co. Leix, the elaborate interlaced decorations between the carved capitals and arches seem to have a great influence on a number of stitches (pl. 34 - 39). These are just a few of many which fascinate the designers. Therefore the customer is always looking for that something original and the designer always has to act as a barometer for the way the customer is feeling about one's-self. Therefore as we move into the nineties, the customer has picked up the desire for a choice of unhampering, pleasurable garments that are expressive of many moods but are never overdone or suffocating of personality. Knitwear is the answer on the "Catwalks".

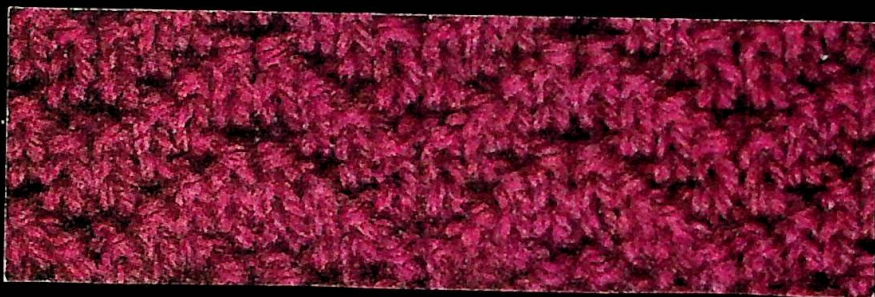
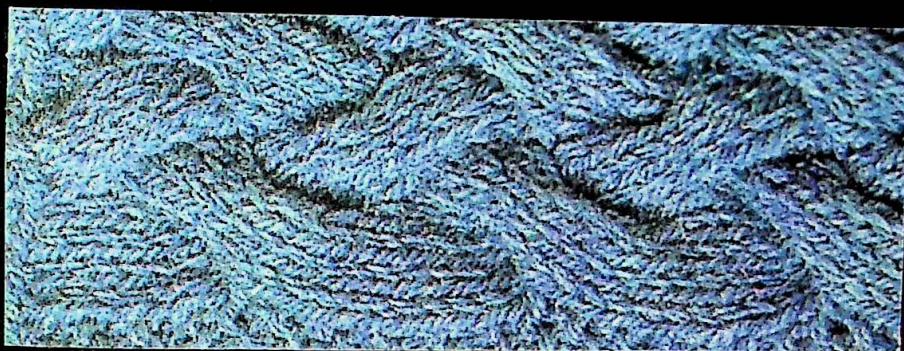
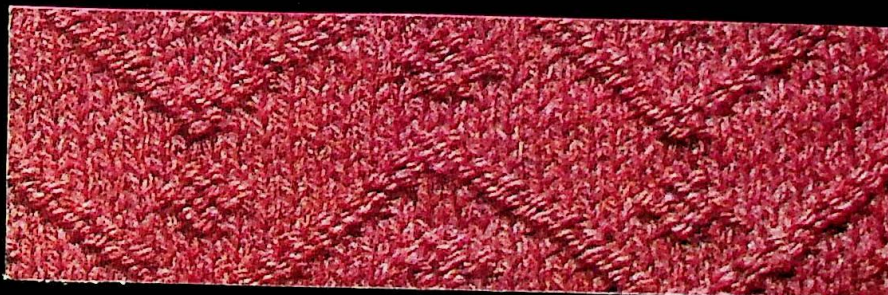
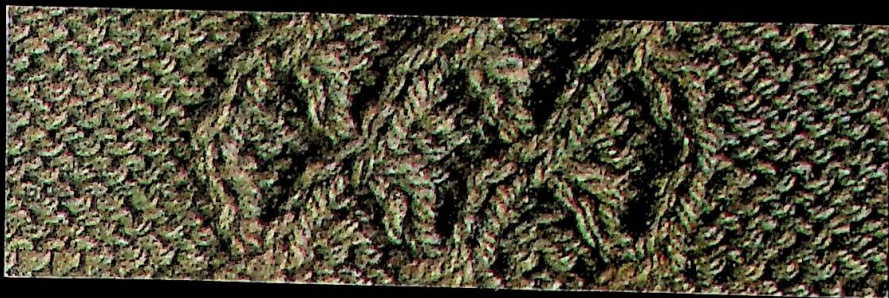


PLATE 35 - 39

Examples of different knitting stitches Treuis with Bobbles, little lattice, fishernet patterns, Chevron R.B. woven cable.

KNITWEAR DESIGNERS

I intend to show some designers who are important assets in the knitwear industry. A new decade is upon us and people want new ideas. I believe that the nineties will produce impeccable knitwear designs with cleverness in finding new media and colour contrasts. I feel strongly that there will be elusive "new looks" for knitwear 90's.

PATRICIA ROBERTS The work of Patricia is aimed at a much smaller market, as most of her designs are sold in Britain which is her home base. All of Patricia's pieces are handknit designerwear, and she is different from all other designers, for she also supplies patterns and wool. Therefore her garments are able to be knit by her customers.

In the Autumn of 1977, two books appeared which signalled if not created, a renaissance in British knitting. The Art of Knitting edited by Eve Harlow and Knitting Patterns by Patricia Roberts. The first book discussed the growing interest in the history of the craft and a widespread desire to seek inspiration from the past, which Aran designers had accomplished. It was a colourful book, containing pictures of historical knitted pieces from museum collections. It was important for colour and curiosity about history are essential to the knitting renaissance.

Patricia's book was even more important. Born in 1945 at Barnard Castle, she was trained at Leicester College of Art and Design. From 1967 to 1971 she worked on Woman's Weekly, editing their comparatively staid knitting receipts. In 1969 the Shetland Education Authority invited her to teach knitwear design to Shetlanders. Through her teaching she claims to actually have learned more about Shetland knitting skills.

Teenage Magazines such as I9 and Honey published her patterns first. In 1972 she turned freelance. Almost magically her creations were being sold in expensive shops in London and New York. This girl was truly ambitious and dedicated, for in 1975 this enterprising young woman published a high-quality fashion magazine, 20 Patricia Roberts Knitting Patterns. This launched hand knitting into a new perspective, determinedly shedding the dowdy domesticated image.

At last in 1976 the first Patricia Roberts Shop had opened in Kinnerton Street, Knightsbridge. Patricia Roberts yarns were marketed: there was explosive sales, exported to Europe, Australia and America.

Patricia believes that her success lay in her feeling for the craft as well as for the clothes. The clothes designed were both technically outstanding and visually pleasing. The resemblance of architecture could be inspiration in this incident. Patricia was very inventive, reinterpretations of old

patterns and translations of structured architectural details are developed in complex techniques of fabric construction. (pl. 40). Patricia is undoubtedly the greatest success in "designer knitwear". Thanks to her knitwear design businesses have proliferated all over the land.

The reason for the burgeoning of the knitwear industry lies in the establishment of many schools of fashion and garment design throughout Britain during the 1960s. Knitwear attracts designers, most of whom are young, because it suits the needs of this particular period. In the sixties, the Italians, French and British proved themselves to leaders in the knitwear field. There was many popular styles in this era of design, the dresses were generally knit in a stocking stitch, therefore it was the shape more than the pattern or texture that was the main feature of these garments.

Knitwear entered a static era in the sixties, it lacked vitality in the sense that it was merely a progression of the styles seen in the fifties and relatively few new ideas were being produced during this period.

The Seventies saw a slight decrease in the amount of knitwear worn. The knitted garments available were suited to the tailored styles of contemporary garments. The most popular styles in the early seventies were tight fitting tank tops and polo necks. Towards the end of the seventies traditional stitches were incorporated into updated styles, such as frontal zip fastening hooded parkas in Aran wool knit in aran stitches. As eighties appear I have particular interest in a knitwear designer called Edina Ronay.

Edina Ronay; The inspiration for Edina to become a knitwear designer came from a passion for collecting thirties and fourties sweaters. They were all extremely rich in detailed stitches. Edina now (1990) has a business with a turnover of two million pounds, selling knitwear and a growing collection line of clothing to Europe, the United States and Japan. In many ways her success has been a matter of following her instinct, a taste for whats right at the time, and a very female knowledge of how women like to dress. In an addition of Vogue Edina was interviewed. Edina sometimes wonders how male designers can know how a woman feels about her clothes, her body, the impression she wants to make. "Alot of my customers are very good looking women who don't want something over the top. They have good figures and want things that flatter and fit. They don't want to be dominated by a look". Edina claims that she tries on every piece



PLATE 40

Designs by Patricia Roberts -
1986

she makes (p 41, 42 & 43).

Edina's first shop, Edina and Lena (a partnership with an ex-model) opened in the King's Road in 1977, selling pretty secondhand knits. When demand outstripped supply they had their own knitwear made based on old designs which were inspired by old architectural expressions. Hence they became leaders of the new wave of creative British hand-knitting. After Edina and Lena parted, it was a logical step into designing clothes. What started in a small way, needing things one could wear with the sweaters, became a whole collection.

Moving with her loyal customers out of the seventies love of second - hand casual dressing, Edina's style has transmarked into sharp eighties chic. The shop in the King's Road has been a vital point of contact in watching and anticipating womens changing needs.

Some more designers have made an impact on the knitwear scene for the future ninties, these are Kaffe Fasset, Sue Bradley, Annabel Fox, Alain Derda, Christian De Falbe and a true Irish Designer Lainey Keogh.

KAFFE FASSET was a painter in his native city San Francisco until he was 28 years old and his knitwear was inspired by sources such as tiled floors, ancient walls, architectural buildings, murals and mosaics. Kaffe uses a combination of colour, texture in yarns. He is known as the master of colour, which is proved by his work. No other designer has such a sure touch with colour schemes. Kaffe has not influenced knitting technique or garment shape, his garments are of a long lasting styles, but his influence is great.

SUE BRADLEY is the up and coming designer in the British Knitwear Industry. I particularly like her design concepts for originality and excitment. Sue pays great attention to her inspirational themes and sources which she uses, which in turn produces great detailed pieces incorporating beading, lace and linen to give a new look to a sweater.

ANNABEL FOX designs clothes as well as knitwear. Graduated from Leicester Art College in 1980, she has recently formed a company which enables her to market garments under her own label. Annabel has done freelance work for magazines and designs for stores such as Liberty. The colours that Annabel uses are bold and are an important feature in her designs. The shapes are always loose and comfortable, the mixing of colours with yarns and emphasis on colour and pattern shines through in her designs

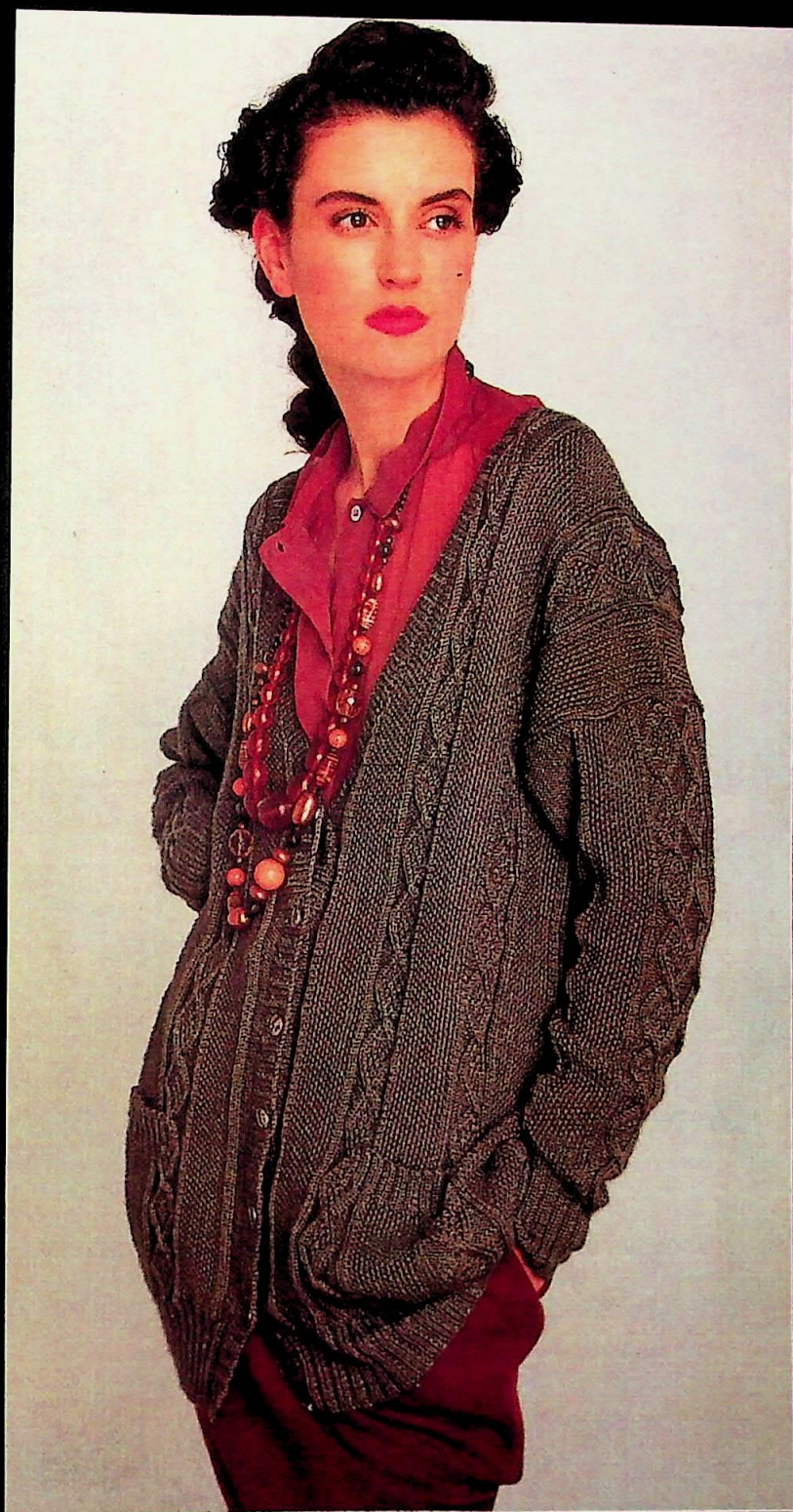
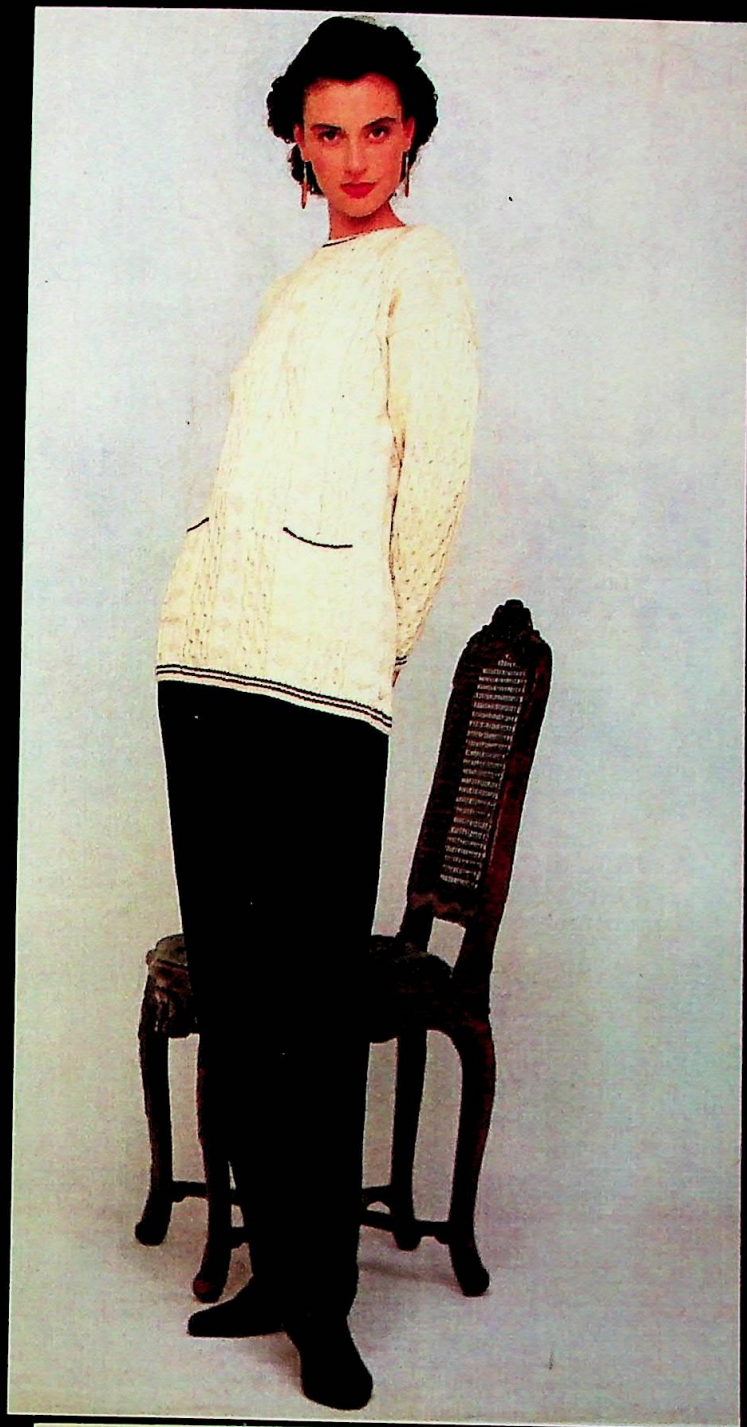
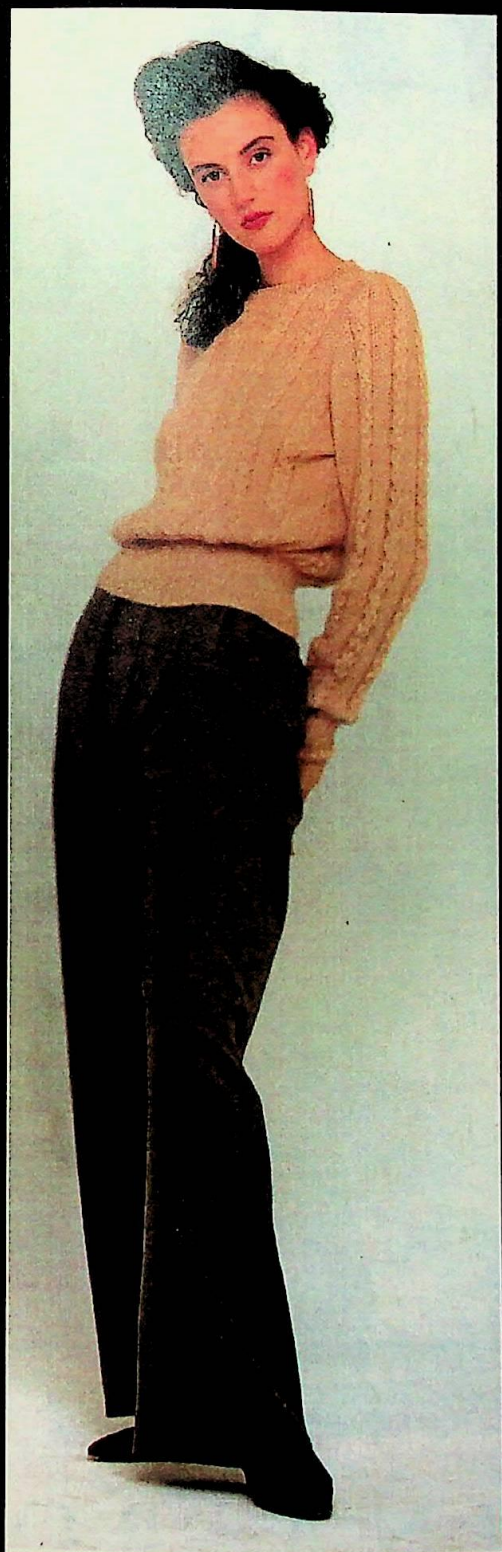


PLATE 41 - 43

Knitwear designs by Edina Ronay.



R O W A N ' S
EDINA · RONAY
silk and wool
50% MULBERRY SILK AND 50% SUPERFINE BOTANY

rather than texture.

ALAIN DERDA is the French Designer who works for the knitting company 'Pingouin'. Alain has produced some very effectively proportioned garments. His designs are sometimes technically difficult to knit due to his preference for having a variety of stitches on each garment. His designs are very structural and a great resemblance of again architectural details. Alain's knitwear designs suit all age groups and the shapes are always very contemporary without having very little garments. He can be adventurous with colour, shape and pattern. Overall his designs are very eye-catching in the areas of colour and texture.

CHRISTIAN DE FALBE is having a great enjoyment and enormous success as a knitwear designer. He stocks 'Liberty's' of London with his patterns and is popular both among young and old. Christian uses a lot of updated classic looks and stitches, such as arans in mini skirts and long fish tailed fitted coats. He developed other little numbers from aran stitches which worked really well in different yarns. His quality of knit is exquisite for he designs only for hand knitting. With his skillful experience he has produced both knitting kits and published books. These books are very well styled and photographed, creating an atmosphere and mood. I particularly enjoy working out his patterns and find his cleverness in finding new surface and colour contrasts fascinating. Co-ordinated looks and a refreshing coherence prevailed in his knitwear designs.

LAINY KEOGH is a very successful Irish Knitwear Designer. The design Centre in Dublin was founded in June, 1985 and has been situated in Powerscourt Townhouse Centre since June, 1987. It is probably the most innovative retail concept in Irish fashion today. Lainy's garments can be seen and sold here. There are many new and talented designers exhibiting and selling their designs, to try and promote Irish Fashion as a total entity where they can launch their careers into the fashion world. Lainy's brilliantly imaginative knitwear has taken her to the forefront of the Irish Fashion World and has featured extensively in the international fashion press. Her designs have been an important influence on the regeneration of Ireland's world renowned knitwear industry. Lainy's designs have been awarded the Late Show's Knitwear Designer of the Year Award, International Wool Secretariat Award, 1st Runner Up to Fil Argent and "Le Lix De Coeur" from Christian LaCroix in the International Linen Awards, Monaco. Her knit are always full of pattern and occasionally the yarn colours are mixed although not that often. Lainy's knitwear is extremely successful and beautiful to wear. Therefore Lainy has gained recognition in the fashion world and

it going to develop her popularity.

A great many more designers are beginning to show knitwear in their collections for the ninties. The most noticable ones are Sonja Rykiel, Ernestina Cerini (Italian Desinger), and Moschino (p 44, 45 & 46).

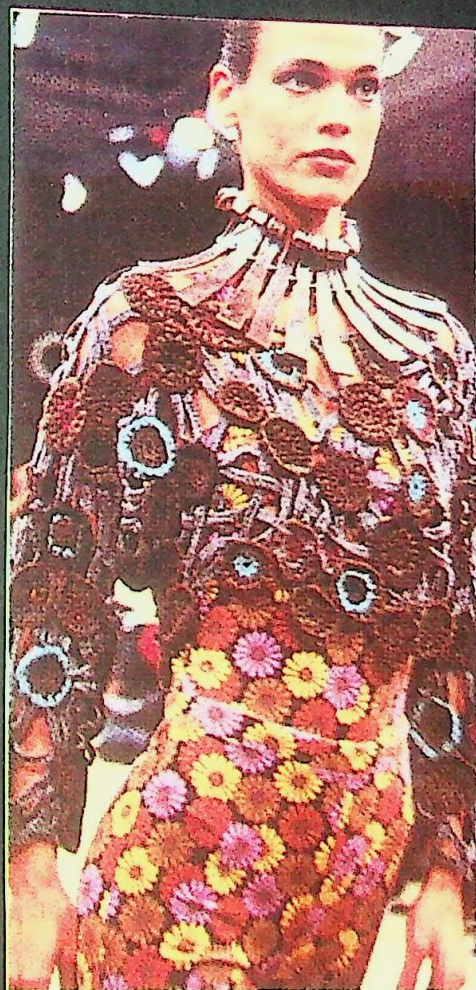
These are just some of my favourite knitwear designers. There are many others but I have chosen these because I feel that they are some of the most interesting, successful inventive and creative designers who will shine in this new decade of the 90s.



PLATE 44 - 46

Designs in Knitwear by European
Fashion consultants.







CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

In chapter one such is the story of how Irish Romanesque Architecture developed between the end of eleventh century. It is relatively long spell for a style which had not a great deal of variation. It was paralleled in Britain where a Sister "Norman" Romanesque style shows a similar development from simplicity to elaboration in approximately the same period of time.

In this way the build up of a logical sequence has been attempted using as many examples as possible.

Another characteristic of this period of architecture as already mentioned is the lack of dates and this makes a definite story of the development impossible because when a feature appears in a number of different places no one can say for certain where it originated and which was copied from which.

Thus there are many varied opinions on the sources of the characteristics of Irish Romanesque Architecture. Cormac's Chapel is the building which causes most of the controversy. Some archeologists and architectural historians such as Liam de Paor and A.W. Clapham see the Irish phase as the Irish adopting Romanesque architecture, which supports that Cormac's Chapel was the real beginning of Romanesque Architecture in Ireland. This argument is completely valid because it cannot be disproved that any feature of Romanesque architecture in Ireland which also appears on Cormac's Chapel, originated, or was first introduced into Ireland in Cormac's Chapel.

Dr. H.G. Leask on the otherhand is of the opinion that the Irish Romanesque architecture, although it owes a lot to foreign influence, is a uniquely Irish style of architecture whose value lies completely in its ornamentation and he logically divides the style into three phases, but he cannot fit Cormac's Chapel into any of them because it is so removed from the normal churches of the time.

In the first Chapter of this thesis care has been taken to offer no opinion on any controversial decision. Nothing has been forwarded except facts, including the facts that certain experts hold certain views. It is up to the individual to settle upon an opinion based on the facts available because everything based on fact is valid.

At the bottom of it all it is not important to the value of the style which church was built after which etc. because it is obvious that the period was unique in Irish history and that the Irish Romanesque was unique in Romanesque history. It is living proof of how the natural culture of Ireland developed when the country was left undisturbed for two centuries and those

thoughts bring with it a certain disappointment when the imagination asks what else the Irish artists might have produced at a different time under similar circumstances and the history book answers that never again were they left undisturbed by foreigners long enough for a truly national style to develop on the same scale as the Irish Romanesque.

Chapter two shows how knitwear has become so popular in recent years that it has created a new market for itself, separate from the clothing or garment industry. Until now people bought clothes and knitwear from the same designer. Customers now have a choice, because a new breed of designers have emerged onto the fashion scene. These are the "knitwear designers", who specialise in knitted garments.

I believe that knitwear has become so popular in recent times, because of the original and modern designs created by up and coming knitwear designers. In my opinion, most designers are influenced by a particular source in this incident, Romanesque plays an important role in designers recognition on international levels.

In the area of detailed knitwear, Aran is outstanding and currently the most popular of all knitwear designs. This is due to the new twist of originality of their designs.

Thus from my thesis knitwear has come a long way since the beginning of the century and I hope I have illustrated why it has become such an innovative and lucrative area of design in recent years.

In my thesis I have recorded the development of Irish Romanesque architecture design, along with the importance it played on knitwear design not only in the structure of stitches, but also in selected paintings of the fourteenth century. I have also included some designers whom I feel laid the foundations for a very colourful and exciting future in the knitwear industry.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following books and articles have been consulted in the writing of this thesis.

Lion de Poor, "Cormac's Chapel : the beginnings of Irish Romanesque" in E. Rynne, Ed. North Munster Studies Limerick, The Thomond Archaeological Society, 1967.

Maire and Liam de Poor, Early Christian Ireland London 1967

Leask H.G. , Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings, Vol I, Dundalk 1955.

Henry Francoise, Irish Art in the Romanesque Period 1020-1170 A.D. London 1967.

Clapham A.W., Romanesque Architecture in Western Europe Oxford 1936

Conant K.J., Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture: 800 -1200 Harmondsworth 1959 (Pelican History of Art)

Champneys A., Irish Ecclesiastical Architecture, Irish Uni Press 1970.

Peusner Nikolaus, An Outline of European Architecture, Pelican 1943.

Flehing J. Honour H., Peusner N.
The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture Penguin 1966

Derda : Alain Pingouin Knitting Books
Printed in France by Istra, Siep and the New Champenouse Printers, also
printed by Brodard Graphique- Draeger Imp et Siep (1983 - 1986).

Ehrman : Hugh Designer Knitting London
First published in 1986 by Century , An imprint of Century Hutchinson Ltd.,
Brookemount House, 62/5 Chandos Place, London.

Fasset : Kaffe Glorious Knitting , London, Melbourne. Century Publishing,
(1985).

Hollingsworth : Shelagh The Complete Book of traditional Aran Knitting
London : Balsford 1982

Probert : Christina Knitting in Vogue, London . David and Charles, Newton
Abbot, London. First published 1982.

Roberts : Patricia, Patricia Roberts Knitting Book W.H. Allen, London First
Published 1981.

Rutt : Kiehard A History of Hand Knitting

Knitting craft volumes spring 1985 London
Harmsworth 1985 - 1986.

ARCHIVES

H.G. Leash "Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings"
Vol. I p. 79 Dun Dalgan Press 1955

H.G. Leask "Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings"
Vol. I. p. 118

MAGAZINE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Monaco Fashion Knits by Wend

Published in 1976 , Charter House Printing Limited.

Taxi Magazine. Fashoin Trends and Leisure Living

January 1990

Taxi Publishing Inc.,

477 Madison Avenue,

New York, N.Y. 10022

I - D ("Trendy Fashion Magazine"

December 1989

Nene River Press (Printing)

Published by Levelprint Ltd., London

Vogue February 1990 Collezioni primavera estat go

Mirabella September 1989

10 East 53rd. Street,

New York, N.Y. 10022