



Alfred Jewel, 871–899 CE, gold, enamel and rock crystal, 6.2 x 3.1 x 1.3 cm, found at North Petherton, Somerset, Ashmolean, Oxford, UK

- I usually keep the historic detail to the minimum in order to concentrate on the art objects but because of the complexity of the interwoven history of the Celts, the Anglo-Saxons kingdoms and the Vikings means I will have to explain some of the history. Also, there are a vast amount number of artefacts, for example, over 4,600 items in the Staffordshire Hoard alone, so I have had to be very selective.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celtic_art

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_art

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viking_art

<https://www.ashmolean.org/alfred-jewel>

REFERENCES AND COPYRIGHT

- My talks and notes are produced with the assistance of AI systems such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Microsoft Bing.
- They are also based on information found on public websites such as Wikipedia, Tate, National Gallery, Louvre, The Met, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Khan Academy and the Art Story.
- If they use information from specific books, websites or articles these are

referenced at the beginning of each talk and in the 'References' section of the relevant page. The talks that are inspired by an exhibition may use the booklets and books associated with the exhibition as a source of information.

- Where possible images and information are taken from Wikipedia under an [Attribution-Share Alike Creative Commons License](#).
- If I have forgotten to reference your work then please let me know and I will add a reference or delete the information.



Reverse side of a Celtic bronze mirror, 50 BCE – 50 CE, showing the spiral and trumpet decorative theme of the late "Insular" La Tène style

11th century Anglo-Saxon walrus ivory cross reliquary, Victoria & Albert Museum

Viking wood carving at Urnes Stave Church in Norway—a rare survival

- Despite the large number of household and military objects found there a few art works surviving from this period and so we have a distorted view of what was produced. In this context, by art, I mean complex decoration that has clearly taken time and skill to produce. I have chosen a wide range of items to convey the scope of what was made at the time.
- Typically, **Celtic art** is ornamental, avoids straight lines and the patterns are often symmetrical. It also often involves complex symbolism and avoids the strict imitation of nature which is central to the classical tradition.
- (CLICK) The **Anglo-Saxons** were Germanic people who settled in England during the 5th century onwards. They spoke Old English and their art is best represented by the metalwork and jewellery from Sutton Hoo and a series of magnificent illuminated manuscripts. Their art is similar to that of the Celts but as we see here may include naturalistic bodies and plant forms.
- (CLICK) **Viking art**, also called Norse art, came from Scandinavia and when the Vikings settled in England between the 8th and 11th centuries it interacted with the existing Celtic and Anglo-Saxon artistic traditions. Our knowledge of Viking art is mostly from metal objects although we believe **wood** was the main artistic

medium **as shown in this rare example**. Their art features intricate interlacing patterns, elaborate knot-work, and symbolic animal forms.

NOTES

- I am using the term Celtic art to refer to the art produced by during the late Iron Age to the Roman conquest by those living in Western Europe centred on Gaul, now France.

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- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celtic_art#/media/File:Romano-Celtic_mirror_\(Desborough\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celtic_art#/media/File:Romano-Celtic_mirror_(Desborough).jpg)

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Hallstatt Era

800-450 BCE



Bronze ceremonial axe, 800 . 750 BC, Hallstatt, Grave No. 504

La Tène Period

450 BCE - 1st Century CE



Agris helmet, iron, bronze, gold, coral, 21.4 high x 23 x 19 cm, cheek-guard: 9.4 x 7.6 cm, 4th century BCE, Agris, Charente, France, Musée d'Angoulême

Insular Period

5th -12th Century CE



Folio 27r Lindisfarne Gospels, Gospel of Matthew, 700 CE, 28.2 x 22.8 cm, British Library

Celtic Art

Bronze ceremonial axe, 800 . 750 BC, Hallstatt, Grave No. 504

Agris helmet, iron, bronze, gold, coral, 21.4 high x 23 x 19 cm, cheek-guard: 9.4 x 7.6 cm, 4th century BCE, Agris, Charente, France, Musée d'Angoulême

Folio 27r from the Lindisfarne Gospels, incipit to the Gospel of Matthew, 700 CE, 28.2 x 22.8 cm, British Library

- Let's start with the oldest — Celtic art. It emerged around 1000 BCE and so Stonehenge is not Celtic as it was begun around 3000 BCE.
- Celtic art is typically divided into the following periods:
- **Hallstatt** (pronounced HAL-shtat') **Era**:
 - Originating around 800 to 450 BCE, this period represents the roots of Celtic culture and art. It was during this time that the Celts developed their unique styles, influenced by their interactions with other cultures
- (CLICK) **La Tène** (pronounced 'LA ten') **Period**:
 - This period, from 450 BCE to the 1st century CE, is considered the prime period of Celtic artwork. It is characterised by swirling curvilinear patterns and represents the peak of Celtic artistic achievement. It is named after a major site in Switzerland.
- (CLICK) **Insular Period**
 - Celtic art in the Middle Ages was practiced by the peoples of Ireland and Scotland in the 700-year period from the Roman withdrawal

from Britain in the 5th century, to the establishment of Romanesque art in the 12th century.

- **Late La Tène or the Romano-British Period.**

- You might wonder about the 400 year gap between La Tène and the Insular Period. This was a transitional period influenced by Roman art in some areas more than others. Sometimes called the Late La Tène to emphasise the continuity seen in Ireland and northern Britain and sometimes the Romano-British period to emphasise the Roman influence seen in southern Britain.

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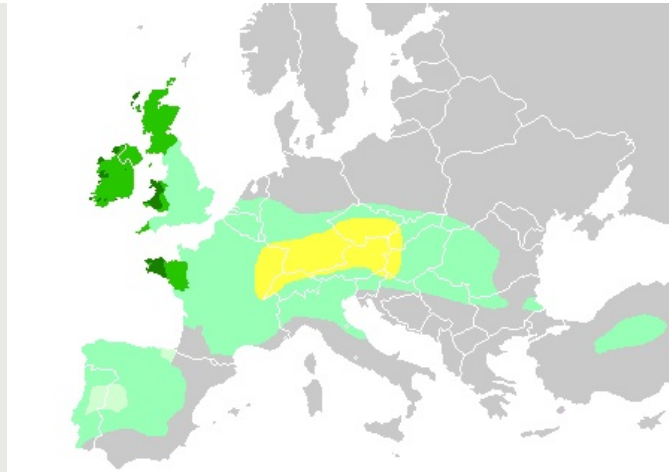
Perplexity (ChatGPT)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hallstatt_culture

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Tène_culture

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agris_Helmet

Celtic Distribution



- Yellow - 6th century BCE, core Hallstatt territory
- Light green - greatest Celtic expansion by 275 BC
- Green - areas in which Celtic languages were spoken throughout the Middle Ages
- Dark green - areas where Celtic languages remain widely spoken today

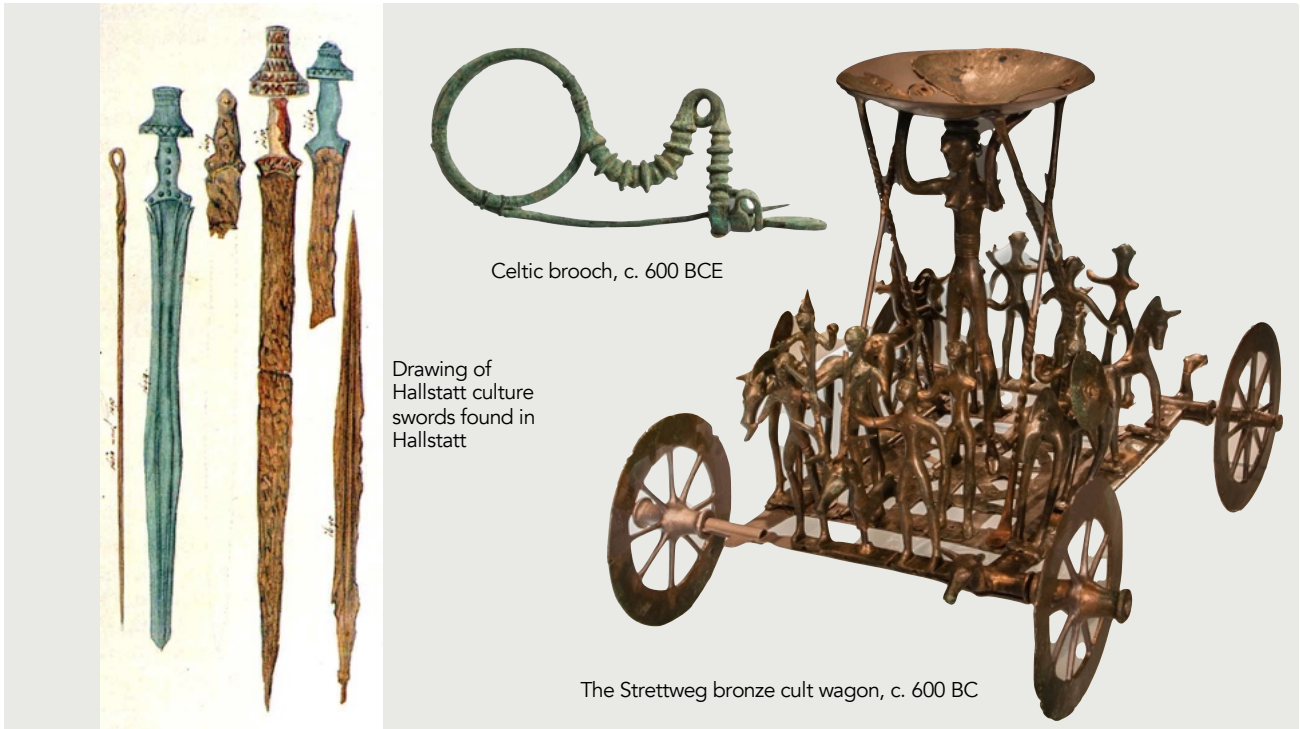
- Let us begin with the Celts. You may be wondering where they came from. This map shows the distribution of Celtic peoples over time:
 - Yellow - 6th century BCE, core Hallstatt territory
 - Light green - greatest Celtic expansion by 275 BC
 - Green - areas in which Celtic languages were spoken throughout the Middle Ages
 - Dark green - areas where Celtic languages remain widely spoken today
- As you can see the Celts originated in central Europe and it appears were tribes with a similar language, religious beliefs, traditions and culture which started to evolve as early as 1200 BCE.
- I said Stonehenge predated the Celts by thousands of years so you may be wondering "Who built Stonehenge?" We don't know. All we can say is that is was the indigenous Neolithic people who occupied the area for 1,500 years from 3100 to 1600 BCE and there is some evidence that large scale construction took place over a 6,500 year period.

NOTES

- Cornish, Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Manx, Welsh and Breton belong to the Celtic branch of Indo-European languages and Celtic divides into two sub-groups Cornish, Welsh and Breton, and Gaelic, Irish and Manx.

REFERENCES

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celts>



Celtic brooch, c. 600 BCE

Drawing of Hallstatt culture swords found in Hallstatt

The Strettweg bronze cult wagon, c. 600 BC

Drawing of Hallstatt culture swords found in Hallstatt

Celtic brooch, c. 600 BCE

The Strettweg bronze cult wagon, c. 600 BC

- The Hallstatt Era beginning about 800 BCE saw a flourishing of artistic expression across Central Europe. Metalwork stands out such as these items Hallstatt swords, brooches, jewellery and decorated chariots.
- Many of these artefacts served not only practical functions but also held symbolic and religious significance.
- Take the Strettweg cult wagon which was part of a prince's grave that was found in present day Austria. The female figure in the centre is 32 cm, about a foot high and she touches the base of a bowl. The wagon contains human figures with animals that look like deer and horses. The assumption is that it represents some type of sacrifice and that the bowl contained a drink used in the religious ceremony (a libation) although some experts believe the bowl was not part of the original wagon.
- As trade routes spread throughout Europe the Celts artistic styles and techniques spread with them leading to regional variations.

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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hallstatt_culture
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Age_sword

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Age_sword
- <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/465321>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strettweg_cult_wagon



Vessels found in the Celtic burial mound "Hohmichele", Hallstatt period in Altheim (near Riedlingen). Württemberg State Museum in Stuttgart

Iron Age woven cloth from the Hallstatt salt mines, Natural History Museum, Vienna



Iron Age leather shoes from the salt mine at Hallstatt, Natural History Museum, Vienna

Vessels found in the Celtic burial mound "Hohmichele", Hallstatt period in Altheim (near Riedlingen). Württemberg State Museum in Stuttgart

Iron Age woven cloth from the Hallstatt salt mines, Natural History Museum, Vienna

Iron Age leather shoes from the salt mine at Hallstatt, Natural History Museum, Vienna

- This period is also known for its pottery which has geometric patterns, its woodwork including carved figures, especially heads, and spoked wheels and its textiles which, surprisingly, have been found in fragments. The textiles are finely woven and often contain a form of tartan (cloth woven with crossing horizontal and vertical bands in multiple colours, forming simple or complex rectangular patterns).
- The Celtic leather shoes are from the salt mine at Hallstatt and have been preserved by the salt. The front part of the shoe is visibly worn out (top). Archaeologists assume that the shoe was used for climbing ladders and stairs in the mines and this is consistent with the fact that only rarely are the heels worn down.

NOTES

- Hallstatt has been classified into four periods, bronze age Hallstatt A (1200 – 1050 BCE) and Hallstatt B (1050 – 800 BCE); and iron age Hallstatt C (800 – 650 BCE) and Hallstatt D (620 – 450 BCE)

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hallstatt_culture



Warrior of Hirschlanden, c. 550 BCE, 1.5 metres, found in Hirschlanden (now Ditzingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany) in 1963 , Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart

Warrior of Hirschlanden, c. 550 BCE, 1.5 metres, found in Hirschlanden (now Ditzingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany) in 1963 , Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart

- This is the Warrior of Hirschlanden. At c. 550 BCE this is the oldest life-size human statue north of the Alps. It is a warrior with an erection, wearing a torc or neck ring, a belt with a dagger and a pointed hat.
- It is made from sandstone as shows a lot of weathering suggesting it was exposed to the elements before being buried. It has been suggested that the statue was influenced by Greek figurative art, possibly seen on Greek black-figure pots.
- The statue was found buried alongside a barrow in what is now Germany. The barrow contained 16 burials over a 150 year period and this statue may have been placed on top from where it fell and became buried.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warrior_of_Hirschlanden

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The "Mšecké Žehrovice Hero" (also known as the "Mšecké Žehrovice Head") is a late 2nd Century BCE or early 1st Century BCE limestone bust of a Celtic warrior. Stone head from Mšecké Žehrovice, Czech Republic, wearing a torc, late La Tène culture, Prague National Museum

- This is much later, from the La Tène culture. It is called the Mšecké Žehrovice Hero or Head (from the town in the Czech Republic where it was discovered, pronounced something like 'Mu-chek-sky Jer-ov-it-ska'). Along with the Warrior of Hirschlanden it is one of the best known works of Celtic art from the Iron Age and one of the few large representation of all or part of the human body.
- The head is about 23 cm high. The face has a moustache and the figure is wearing a torc.
- (CLICK) The face is almost flat and the hair is braided and appears to be shaven at the back.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celtic_art

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mšecké_Žehrovice_Head (English version)

The Snettisham Great Torc. Found in Snettisham, UK. Electrum, 150 BC–50 BC. Diam. 19.9 cm. British Museum



Gold twisted torc. 150-50 BC, Snettisham, UK, Electrum, Diam. 21 cm, British Museum



Style I animal art is a silver-gilt square-headed brooch from a female grave on the Isle of Wight

The Snettisham Great Torc. Found in Snettisham, UK. Electrum, 150 BC–50 BC. Diam. 19.9 cm. British Museum

Gold twisted torc. 150-50 BC, Snettisham, UK, Electrum, Diam. 21 cm, British Museum. X-ray analysis reveals that all the wires at the back have snapped because of frequent bending required to put it on.

- As we have seen neck bands or torcs were a common item in Celtic jewellery. You may have wondered how they were put on. They were put on by bending the arms and then bending them back. Now, bending metal results in metal fatigue and it seems this did occur.
- (CLICK) Look at this torc. We know from X-ray analysis that all the strands are broken beneath the copper sheath repair and perhaps the wire at the front was to strengthen it so it would not fall off.

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- A bit more history on order to explain where the Angles and Saxons came from.
- The Romans occupied England from 43 CE and had conquered most of southern England by 87 CE. At this time England was occupied by many tribes that rebelled, such as when Boudica of the Iceni tribe revolted of 60CE. They were all put down by the Romans who ruled the country for about 400 years. When they left in 410 CE the indigenous Celtic tribes remained and were known as the Britons.
- The Angles came from modern day Denmark and invaded the area around the Wash and the Saxons came from a small area of Northern Germany and invaded south-east England. The Jutes came from northern Denmark and invaded what is now Kent. This took place in the 5th century after the Romans had left and they conquered the British tribes in those areas.
- (CLICK) In due course there were seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms collectively known as the heptarchy. Each had their own king and the size of each area varied depending on the power of the king. The kingdoms were called:
 - Northumbria
 - Mercia
 - Wessex
 - Kent
 - East Anglia
 - Essex
 - Sussex

- The term Anglo-Saxon is used to refer to the people who inhabited and ruled Britain from about 450 CE to the Norman invasion of 1066. During the early tenth century, the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were united by Edward the Elder (reigned 898–924) and Æthelstan (reigned in 924–939) to form the Kingdom of England.
- So let us look at the art of the Anglo-Saxons...

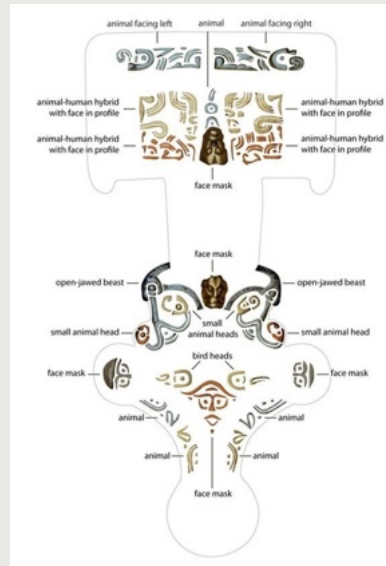
NOTES

- Some of the prominent Iron Age tribes in Britain included the Silures, Belgae, Atrebates, Cornovii, Corieltauvi, Parisi, Brigantes, and Deceangli.

REFERENCES

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heptarchy>

Silver-gilt square-headed brooch from Grave 22, early 6th century, Chessell Down, Early Anglo-Saxon, Isle of Wight, British Museum



Anglo-Saxon Art

Silver-gilt square-headed brooch from Grave 22, early 6th century, Chessell Down, Early Anglo-Saxon, Isle of Wight, British Museum

- Clothes at that time were fastened with pins and brooches and this is a silver brooch gilded with gold. It was found in the grave of a woman from the 5th-6th century together with two stamped pendants, a pair of tweezers, an iron knife and a waist buckle.
- The brooch is influenced by Scandinavian art and its complex motifs are a mixture of human and animal forms.
- (CLICK) It is difficult to decipher the forms but this diagram gives you some idea of the complexity of the motifs, many are human or animal heads or symbols.
- The brooch is obviously expensive and the craftsmanship exquisite. We can assume that the forms and figures had a symbolic social and probably religious significance but that is now lost. The images may have referred to stories and traditions, for example, the central bearded face may be Woden with ravens and the others creatures and characters from legend. It may have been intended to ward off evil or to give the wearer strength, courage and wealth.

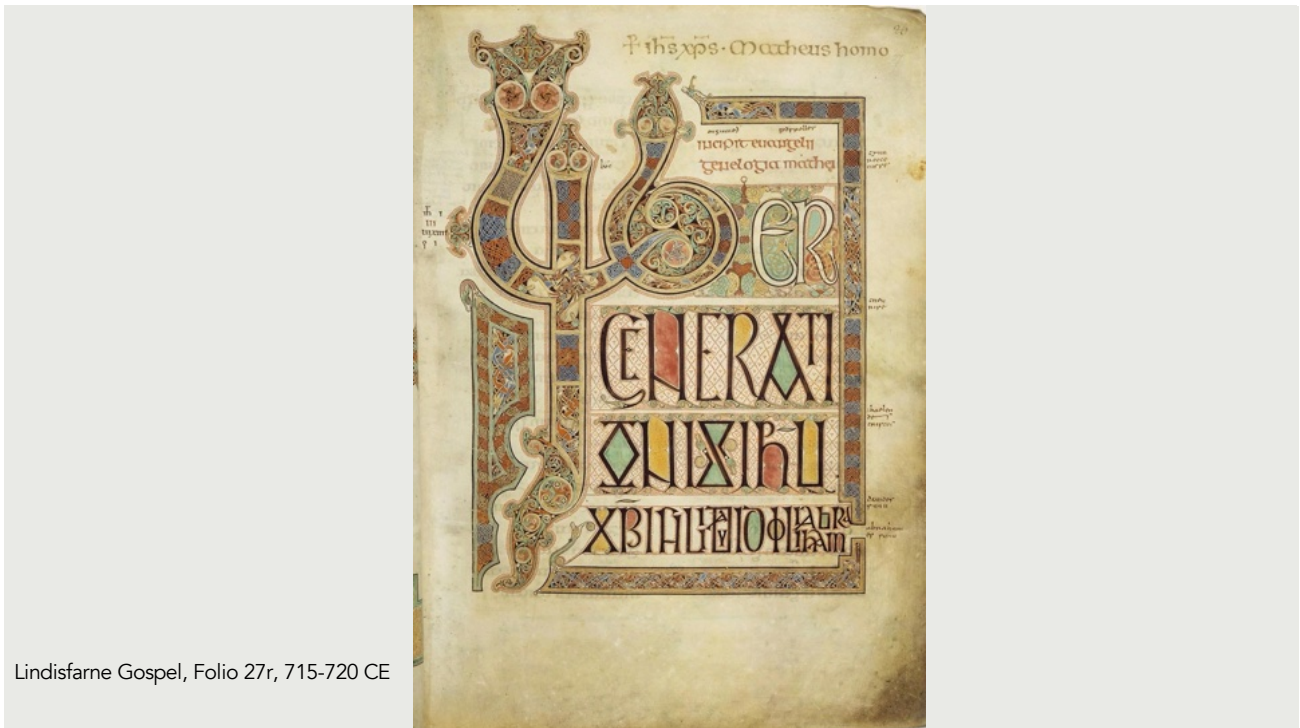
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Lindisfarne Gospel, Folio 27r, 715-720 CE

Lindisfarne Gospel, Folio 27r, 715-720 CE, contains the first few words (the incipit) from the Gospel of Matthew.

POST-ROMAN INSULAR PERIOD

- Celtic art in the Middle Ages was still practiced by the peoples of Ireland and parts of Britain in the 700-year period from the Roman withdrawal from Britain in the 5th century, to the establishment of Romanesque art in the 12th century.
- In 635 the Northumbrian king, Oswald (reigned 634–42), summoned an Irish monk named Aidan from Iona – the island-monastery off the south-west coast of what is now Scotland – to be bishop of his kingdom. Oswald granted Aidan and his companions the small tidal island of Lindisfarne on which to found a monastery.
- The Lindisfarne Gospels is an illuminated manuscript gospel book probably produced around the years 715–720 in the monastery at Lindisfarne and it is now in the British Library in London.
- The manuscript is one of the finest works of the Medieval period produced in a unique style called Insular art or Hiberno-Saxon. It combines Mediterranean, Anglo-Saxon and Celtic elements.
- The Lindisfarne Gospels are presumed to be the work of a monk named Eadfrith, who became Bishop of Lindisfarne in 698 and died in 721.
- The text is Latin and this page says 'Liber generationis iesu christi' that is, the book of the generation of Jesus Christ. The Lindisfarne Gospels are the first known translation of the Christian gospels into Old English (Anglo-Saxon) which

is written alongside or between the lines of Latin.

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The Book of Kells,
(folio 292r and
folio 12), c. 800,
Trinity College
Library, Dublin



The Book of Kells, (folio 292r), c. 800, Trinity College Library, Dublin, showing the lavishly decorated text that opens the Gospel of John

The Book of Kells, (folio 12), The Four Evangelists, represented by the Angel for Saint Matthew, the Lion for Saint Mark, the Ox for Saint Luke and the Eagle for Saint John.

- *The Book of Kells* is sometimes known as the *Book of Columba* as it was created in a Columban monastery in either Ireland or Scotland around c. 800 CE.
- Columba (521-597) was an Irish abbot who spread Christianity across what is now Scotland. It was Columba who founded the abbey on Iona which became the leading religious centre for centuries.
- It is illustrated with figures of humans, animals and mythical beasts, with Celtic knots and interlacing patterns in vibrant colours. Many of these minor decorative elements are filled with Christian symbolism and this adds meaning to the themes of the illustrations.
- (CLICK) This page shows the Four Evangelists, represented by the Angel for Saint Matthew, the Lion for Saint Mark, the Ox for Saint Luke and the Eagle for Saint John
- The Lindisfarne Gospels and the Book of Kells are examples of the Insular or Island style. A sort of combination of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon art with interlaced decoration. It was produced after the Romans left and Britain and Ireland shared this common style which was different from the rest of Europe.

REFERENCES

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insular_art

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columba>



The Sutton Hoo helmet, early 7th century, iron and tinned copper alloy helmet, 31.8 x 21.5 cm, British Museum

Sutton Hoo helmet reconstruction, 2015

- We now come to Sutton Hoo, the most impressive medieval grave to be found in Europe. The burial mound contained a 27 metre long ship and a burial chamber full of treasures. It was excavated in 1939 by the amateur archeologist Basil Brown on the property of Edith Pretty but when its importance became apparent the dig was taken over by national experts.
- The ship burial contained feasting vessels, hanging bowls, silverware from Byzantium, textiles, gold accessories with garnets from Sri Lanka and this iconic helmet with a human mask.
- It was the grave of an important person who died in the early 7th century, probably a king and possibly King Raedwald, who ruled East Anglia. The person was left-handed indicated by the pattern of wear on his sword which was lain on his right side. His helmet was laid on the left side of his head wrapped in a cloth.
- (CLICK) This is a reconstruction by the Royal Armoury of what the original might have looked like. It is decorated with fighting and dancing warriors and fierce creatures. The face mask forms either a pair of gilded boar's heads or a dragon whose wings make the eyebrows and whose tail the moustache.

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The purse-lid, Great Buckle, ornate gold belt and the two identical shoulder-clasps from the treasure

- The Sutton Hoo discoveries provide a rich source of archaeological evidence for the Anglo-Saxon period and have changed our understanding of the period. These items, a purse-lid, buckle and shoulder clasp are a few of the 263 items found that reveal a cultured and sophisticated society.
- The treasures found point to international connections, with items from Byzantium, Egypt, and across Europe. Although started in 1939 the site is still the focus of ongoing research and exploration, with later archaeological campaigns solving mysteries left by the original dig and revealing more about life in this Anglo-Saxon period.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sutton_Hoo



A selection of highlight pieces from the Staffordshire Hoard (top) and a [gold sword hilt](#) fitting with [cloisonné garnet](#) inlay (below), uncleaned by conservators, still showing traces of soil

Staffordshire Hoard, A selection of highlight pieces from the Staffordshire Hoard (top) and a gold sword hilt fitting with cloisonné garnet inlay (below), uncleaned by conservators, still showing traces of soil

- The Staffordshire Hoard is the largest hoard of Anglo-Saxon gold and silver metalwork yet found. It consists of almost 4,600 items and metal fragments, amounting to a total of 5.1 kg (11 lb) of gold, 1.4 kg (3 lb) of silver and some 3,500 pieces of garnet cloisonné jewellery of which there is a selection here.
- Cloisonné (pronounced "kloy-zo-nay") is an ancient and skilled metalworking technique that uses coloured glass or enamel to create intricate designs on metal objects. This typically gold wires are soldered onto a metal base to create the outlines. Finely ground coloured glass is then mixed with water to create a paste which is used to fill each compartment. The object is then fired in a kiln at a high temperature to melt the glass and fuse it with the metal. Finally, it is smoothed and polished. The technique is thought to have been discovered in the Middle East about the 8th century BCE and from there spread to China, Byzantium and Europe.
- The hoard was most likely deposited between 650 and 675 CE, and contains artefacts probably manufactured during the 6th and 7th centuries. It was discovered in 2009 in a field near the village of Hammerwich, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, England. The location was in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia at the time the hoard was buried.
- Apart from three religious objects the items in the hoard are military, and there

are no domestic objects, such as vessels or eating utensils, or feminine jewellery, which are the more common Anglo-Saxon gold finds.

REFERENCES

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Ruthwell Cross, 8th century, detail The washing of Christ's feet, south side

Bewcastle Cross, 7-8th century, west face (left), south and east faces (right)

Ruthwell Cross, 8th century, detail The washing of Christ's feet, south side
 Bewcastle Cross, 7-8th century, west face (left), south and east faces (right)

- The Ruthwell Cross is a stone Anglo-Saxon cross probably dating from the 8th century, when the village of Ruthwell, now in Scotland, was part of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Northumbria. The cross was smashed by Presbyterian iconoclasts in 1642, and the pieces left in the churchyard until they were restored and re-erected in the manse garden in 1823 by Henry Duncan. In 1887 it was moved into its current location inside Ruthwell church, Dumfriesshire, Scotland
- The Bewcastle Cross is an Anglo-Saxon cross which is still in its original position within the churchyard of St Cuthbert's church at Bewcastle, in the English county of Cumbria. The cross, which probably dates from the 7th or early 8th century, features reliefs and inscriptions in the runic alphabet.
- It has been described by Nikolaus Pevsner thus; "**The crosses of Bewcastle and Ruthwell ... are the greatest achievement of their date in the whole of Europe.**"

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Alfred Jewel, 871–899 CE, gold, enamel and rock crystal, 6.2 x 3.1 x 1.3 cm, found at North Petherton, Somerset, Ashmolean, Oxford, UK

Alfred Jewel, 871–899 CE, gold, enamel and rock crystal, 6.2 x 3.1 x 1.3 cm, found at North Petherton, Somerset, Ashmolean, Oxford, UK

- The Alfred Jewel is a piece of Anglo-Saxon goldsmithing work made of enamel and quartz enclosed in gold. It was discovered in 1693, in North Petherton, Somerset, England and is now one of the most popular exhibits at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. It has been dated to the late 9th century, in the reign of Alfred the Great, and is inscribed "aelfred mec heht gewyrcan", meaning "Alfred ordered me made".
- The jewel was once attached to a rod, probably of wood, at its base. After decades of scholarly discussion, it is now "generally accepted" that the jewel's function was to be the handle for a pointer stick for following words when reading a book. It is an exceptional and unusual example of Anglo-Saxon jewellery. The figure on the face of the jewel is cloisonné.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Jewel



King Doniert's Stone site, near St. Cleer in Cornwall, UK

King Doniert's Stone, c.875

- From the 5th to the mid-9th centuries, the art of the Picts in Scotland is primarily known through stone sculpture, and a smaller number of pieces of metalwork, often of very high quality; there are no known illuminated manuscripts.
- King Doniert's Stone is near St. Cleer in Cornwall, UK. The stone of the right is the actual "Doniert's Stone" and bears an inscription which tells that King Doniert had the cross built for the good of his soul. The stone on the left is called the "Other Half Stone"
- In the 5th century, Christianity was first brought to Cornwall by monks from Wales and Ireland. The early missionaries are believed to have erected wooden crosses to show places in which they had won victories for Christ. In time these places became sanctified and the wooden crosses were replaced by stone ones.
- In the nineteenth century a hidden cruciform vault about 130 cm (four feet) wide and six metres (18 feet) long and slightly less wide. It was discovered about three metres (8-9 feet) beneath the stones and was carved out the solid rock. It is connected by a tunnel to another passage but its purpose and its connection with the crosses is unknown.

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- By the **10th century** the **Vikings**, who will be discussed next, **occupied the north-east of England**. The rest of the country at this time consisted of **Mercia** (ruled by Aethelred, Lord of the Mercians, r. 881-911 CE) and **Wessex**.
- Because it was more isolated Wessex managed to resist the Vikings. Key figures like **Kings Alfred the Great** (871-899) and **Edward the Elder** (899-924) strengthened Wessex's military power, forged an alliance with Mercia and Edward the Elder's son Æthelstan (927-939) united all of England by conquering Northumberland in 927.
- England was conquered by the Normans in 1066 but has remained as a political unit since 927.

NOTES

- The Danelaw was established following the invasion of the Great Heathen Army into England in 865 and was characterised by a blend of Danish and Anglo-Saxon customs and laws. By 910 the people who lived in the north-east were ruled by the Danes, that is the Vikings. The Danelaw originated from the increase in population and productivity in Scandinavia, prompting Viking warriors to settle in England for farming.
- The Danelaw came to an end in 954 AD when Eric Bloodaxe was driven out of Northumbria. This was the end of the Danelaw although many Danelaw place names, customs and laws were retained. From 1016 Cnut ruled over the unified England followed by two of his sons but in 1066 the monarchy reverted to the

English line with Edward the Confessor.

- **NOTES**

- The Danes did not give up their designs on England. From 1016 to 1035, Cnut the Great ruled over a unified English kingdom, itself the product of a resurgent Wessex, as part of his North Sea Empire, together with Denmark, Norway and part of Sweden. Cnut was succeeded in England on his death by his son Harold Harefoot, until he died in 1040, after which another of Cnut's sons, Harthacnut, took the throne. Since Harthacnut was already on the Danish throne, this reunited the North Sea Empire. Harthacnut lived only another two years, and from his death in 1042 until 1066 the monarchy reverted to the English line in the form of Edward the Confessor.

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Viking Art

Animal head post found in burial mound near Tønsberg (Oseberg ship burial), 9th century, Oseberg style, wood and paint (no longer existing), The Museum of Cultural History in Oslo;

Silver disc brooch, Borre style, late 9th–10th century, silver, 7.8 cm in diameter, found in Gotland, Sweden, British Museum

Animal head post found in burial mound near Tønsberg (Oseberg ship burial), 9th century, Oseberg style, wood and paint (no longer existing), The Museum of Cultural History in Oslo; photo: Kirsten Helgeland

Silver disc brooch, Borre style, late 9th–10th century, silver, 7.8 cm in diameter, found in Gotland, Sweden, British Museum

- The Vikings came from Scandinavia, which includes the modern-day countries of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The Viking Age, from around AD 800 to 1050, saw these seafaring warriors raid and colonise wide areas of Europe. The Vikings were not a single "race" but rather small groups from various regions of Scandinavia. They were prompted to undertake raids by a combination of factors, including overpopulation at home, the lure of adventure and plunder overseas.
- The Vikings' expansion in Europe and beyond was characterised by **hit-and-run raids**, plundering, and colonisation. They also engaged in **peaceful trade** and exploration, establishing cities and colonies in various regions, including **Dublin in Ireland** and the region of Normandy in France.
- The art from these periods **include manuscript illumination, metalwork, jewellery, and architecture**, all of which show distinctive aesthetic qualities.
- Viking art developed six main art styles, each with distinct characteristics and influences. These styles are named for the areas where decorated objects were found and include in roughly chronological order, although their dates overlap, the Oseberg (OH-suh-berg), Borre (BOH-ruh), Jelling (YEH-ling), Mammen

(MAH-men), Ringerike (RING-uh-ree-kuh) and Urnes (UR-nes) styles. These art styles are associated with specific time periods and regions, reflecting the evolution of Viking artistic expression over time.

- On the left is an Oseberg (OH-suh-berg) animal head post found as part of a ship burial. Ship and boat burial was practised by seafaring nations in Europe and Asia and particular by the Vikings. The largest ship grave found is 20 metres, 65 feet long.
- On the right is a cast silver brooch in Borre (BOH-ruh) style. There are four mask-like heads around the outside, Note all the double lines are nicked to look like beaded wire. The central knob is riveted on and has eight projecting animal heads. The quality of the workmanship make this the finest of the Borre-style brooches found in Gotland.

NOTES

- Oseberg c. 775/800–875 C.E.
- Borre c. 850–975 C.E.
- Jellinge c. 900–975 C.E.
- Mammen c. 960s–1000/1025 C.E.
- Ringerike c. 990–1050 C.E.
- Urnes c. 1050–1125 C.E.
- Anglo-Saxon art is best divided into two main periods:
 - **Before the Viking (Danish) Invasion:**
 - This period encompasses the art created before the Danish invasions of England in the 9th century. It was influenced by Celtic art and takes the form of manuscript illumination, metalwork, and carvings, with bright colouring and interlaced patterns based on animal forms.
 - **After the Viking (Danish) Invasion:**
 - The second period covers the art created after the Danish invasions, which had a significant impact on Anglo-Saxon art until the mid-10th century. This period saw a revival of monasteries and a growing interest in architecture.

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Figurine, possibly a Valkyrie (view from 4 sides). AD 800, Hårby, Funen, Denmark, silver, height 3.4 cm, National Museum of Denmark

Figurine, possibly a Valkyrie (view from 4 sides). AD 800, Hårby, Funen, Denmark, silver, height 3.4 cm, National Museum of Denmark

- There are few Viking-made Valkyrie figures and those like this one cannot be categorically identified as Valkyries. A Valkyrie is a female warrior as opposed to a shield-maiden or a female mythological figure and Valkyries play an important role in Norse mythology including poems and sagas. This small female figurine from Hårby (pronounced 'haw-bee') has a helmet and a shield suggesting it could be a Valkyrie.

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<https://www.britishmuseum.org/blog/viking-women-warriors-and-valkyries>



Silver Cup, 958/959, Jellinge style, found in Jelling, Jutland, Denmark, National Museum of Denmark



Mammen-style axe, 970-71, inlaid with silver, from Mammen, National Museum of Denmark

Silver Cup, 958/959, Jellinge style, found in Jelling, Jutland, Denmark, National Museum of Denmark

Mammen-style axe, 970-71, inlaid with silver, from Mammen, National Museum of Denmark

- The Jelling Cup also known as the Gorm's Cup was discovered in 1842 inside a royal burial mound established by King Gorm the Old (d. 958). The decoration is Jelling-style which is intertwined stylised animals with an S-shaped curve. There is a mixture of naturalistic and abstract components.
- On the right is a silver-inlaid axe found in 1868 near Mammen, Denmark. It is thought to date to 970-971 CE. Mammen-style consists of intertwined plant and animals elements, intricate details and a sense of movement. The grave in which it was found contained a ceremonial costume and a large wax candle suggesting a high status individual. The Mammen-style is named after the decoration on the axe which is also found in other objects such as jewellery and gaming pieces.



A replica of the Cammin Casket (also called the Cammin shrine), a masterwork of Mammen style Viking Age art, c. 1000, found in Kamen Pomorski, Poland



Stone from sarcophagus at St. Paul's churchyard, London

A replica of the Cammin Casket (also called the Cammin shrine), a masterwork of Mammen style Viking Age art, c. 1000, found in Kamen Pomorski, Poland. The original disappeared during World War II (Hamburg Archaeological Museum)
Stone from sarcophagus at St. Paul's churchyard, London (photo: David Beard MA)

- The Cammin Casket was in the Cathedral of Saint John in Cammin, Poland and it contained the relics of Saint Cordula. Unfortunately it was destroyed in a fire in 1945 and this is a replica made from plaster casts and other replicas that had been made some years before. It is an important example of the Mammen-style.
- On the right, is a runestone from St Paul's cathedral churchyard in Ringerike (RING-uh-ree-kuh) style. It is now in the Museum of London. It is thought it was made in memory of a Viking warrior who died in service of king Canute the Great, and the creature on the stone may represent Sleipnir, Odin's eight-legged horse. The runic inscription read "Ginna(?)/Gína(?) had this stone laid and (i.e. with) Tóki".

NOTES

- Runestones can be memorials as here, commemorate an event such as a battle, serve religious purposes, mark a boundary or even express a personal message such as a declaration of love.
- Runes are an ancient writing system used by Germanic peoples throughout

Northern Europe and parts of Britain, from the 2nd century AD to the late Middle Ages.

- Odin was the chief of the Norse gods and ruler of Asgard, the realm of the gods. He had an insatiable thirst for knowledge and famously sacrificed an eye in exchange for a drink from the well of Mimir which granted him wisdom and knowledge of the past and future. He led the Valkyries, a band of female warriors who chose fallen heroes to be brought to Valhalla, the hall of the slain in Asgard. He was a complex character, often depicted as enigmatic and unpredictable and he sometimes disguised himself and engaged in trickery and manipulation to achieve his ends.



The Pitney disc-brooch, late 11th century, Urnes style, copper alloy and gold, found in Pitney, England, British Museum



The Bell Shrine of St. Patrick, c. 1100, bronze, silver-gilt frame, National Museum of Ireland

The Pitney disc-brooch, late 11th century, Urnes style, copper alloy and gold, found in Pitney, England, British Museum

The Bell Shrine of St. Patrick, c. 1100, bronze, silver-gilt frame, 30 gold filigree panels (some now missing), rock crystal, National Museum of Ireland, photo: Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank

- The Pitney disc-brooch is metalwork in the Urnes (pronounced 'earns') style. It was discovered in the 1870s in a churchyard in Pitney, Somerset and is believed to be late 11th century placing it within the Viking age (793-1066 CE). There is a coiled, ribbon-like animal in the centre fighting a snake possibly biting its own tail. This is typical of the Urnes style. The scalloped border and the beads running along the underside of the animal are more typical of Anglo-Saxon brooches so this shows Viking and Anglo-Saxon influences.
- On the right is a reliquary, that is a container for religious relics. It contains the Bell of St. Patrick which is believed to date from the 6th-8th centuries CE, which means it is within the Early Christian period of Ireland. St. Patrick introduced Christianity into Ireland in the 5th century. The outer reliquary was made about 1100 CE from bronze, silver and gold and the intricate patterns include Viking-inspired elements but also Romanesque motifs.
- The introduction of European-style monarchy brought the Viking age to an end about the 13th century. The Ringerike (RING-uh-ree-kuh) and Urnes styles thrived until then when the European Romanesque style took over.



Nave of the Durham Cathedral



The Crucifixion of Poitiers Cathédrale Saint-Pierre, 12th century

Nave of the Durham Cathedral

The Crucifixion of Poitiers Cathédrale Saint-Pierre, 12th century

- **Romanesque art** is the art of Europe **from approximately 1000 AD to the rise of the Gothic style** in the 12th century, or later depending on region. Romanesque architecture can be recognised by its **rounded arches, barrel vaulting, apses and chevron and acanthus-leaf decoration**. Romanesque art was also greatly **influenced by Byzantine art**, especially in painting (see my talk on Byzantine Art).
- **Durham Cathedral is the finest example of 'pure' Romanesque style in England**. The present building was completed between 1093 and 1133, replacing the Anglo-Saxon 'White Church'.
- The **Crucifixion window in Poitiers Cathedral** is considered one of the supreme achievements of **Romanesque stained glass in western France**. It was completed around 1165-1170, making it one of the **earliest large stained glass windows in a French cathedral**. It was given by Henry II and Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine to the church. Romanesque art emphasised bold lines, rounded forms, and vibrant colours as we see here.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poitiers_Cathedral



Bayeux Tapestry - Scene 57: the death of King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. Legend above: Harold rex interfectus est, "King Harold is killed", 1070s

Bayeux Tapestry - Scene 57: the death of King Harold at the Battle of Hastings. Legend above: Harold rex interfectus est, "King Harold is killed", 1070s

- In England there was a dramatic change in the culture following the Norman Conquest in 1066. The English were conquered by the Normans at the Battle of Hastings shown here in the Bayeux tapestry made a few years later. This scene depicts King Harold, second from the left killed by an arrow in his eye.

• **NOTES**

- The Bayeux Tapestry is an embroidered cloth nearly 70 metres (230 feet) long and 50 centimetres (20 inches) tall that shows the events leading up to the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, led by William, Duke of Normandy challenging Harold II, King of England, and culminating in the Battle of Hastings. It is thought to date to the 11th century, within a few years of the battle. Now widely accepted to have been made in England perhaps as a gift for William, it tells the story from the point of view of the conquering Normans and for centuries has been preserved in Normandy.

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CELTIC, ANGLO-SAXON AND VIKING ART

DR. LAURENCE SHAFE
ART@SHAFE.UK
WWW.SHAFE.UK

Alfred Jewel, 871–899 CE, Ashmolean, Oxford, UK

Alfred Jewel, 871–899 CE, gold, enamel and rock crystal, 6.2 x 3.1 x 1.3 cm, found at North Petherton, Somerset, Ashmolean, Oxford, UK

- That brings us to the end of a complex period in English history and a few of the art works associated with each culture showing how they evolved and influenced each other.
- Thank you for your attention.