

**Notes for Teachers
to accompany the
Viking Ireland
Film Resource**

**Education & Outreach
Department**

National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology

Notes for Teachers

What is the Viking Ireland Film Resource?

- The Viking Ireland Film Resource consists of a set of short films, around five minutes in duration which explore the archaeological evidence of Viking Age Ireland. Accompanying the films are a glossary of terms, scripts of each film and this set of notes for teachers.
- Each film features members of staff from the National Museum explaining what we can learn about Viking culture by looking at artefacts which have been discovered in Ireland.
- A number of the films feature artefacts which have been in the Museum for decades, while some show artefacts discovered during recent excavations of burials and new artefacts finds. Some of the artefacts discussed are 'famous' Irish artefacts such as the Cross of Cong, St Patrick's Bell Shrine and the Shrine of the *Cathach*.
- The Education Department worked with a young Irish film company, McKenna films, to create the short films. The films were shot last November and December in the exhibitions at the National Museum of Ireland-Archaeology at Kildare Street and in the conservation studios of the National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks.

The short films are on the following themes:

- The Arrival of the Vikings and Beliefs
- Viking Women in Ireland
- The Irish and the Vikings
- Daily Life in Viking Ireland
- The Legacy of the Vikings in Ireland

A Short Description of the Films

The Arrival of the Vikings and Beliefs

Maeve Sikora, Keeper of Irish Antiquities at the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, takes a look at Viking burials that have been uncovered in the Dublin area. How can we tell it is a Viking burial? What can we learn from a skeleton? Are burials of Vikings still being discovered today?

Viking Women in Ireland

Maeve Sikora, Keeper of Irish Antiquities at the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, discusses burials of Viking women that have been uncovered in the Dublin area. What was discovered in the graves with the women? Why were they buried with artefacts?

The Irish and the Vikings

Eamonn Kelly, Former Keeper of Irish Antiquities at the National Museum of Ireland examines the evidence for interaction between the Irish and the Vikings. What was life like for the Irish population during the Viking Age? What contact was there between the Irish and the Vikings, how can we tell?

Daily Life in Viking Ireland

Dr Patrick Wallace, Former Director of the National Museum of Ireland, gives a fascinating insight into what was discovered at the Wood Quay excavations in Dublin and what these unique artefacts can tell us about everyday life in Dublin during the Viking Age.

The Legacy of the Vikings in Ireland

Ragnhalla O'Floinn, Former Director of the National Museum of Ireland, discusses the long lasting influence of the Vikings on Irish culture with special focus on the art styles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Ireland. Did you know that some of the most impressive artefacts of the Early Christian period in Ireland are decorated with Viking motifs?

Why were they developed?

The Education and Outreach Department has a remit to develop resources for schools and families to use so that they can explore the Museum's collections in an interesting, interactive and educational way. Aware of the particular interest in the topic of the Vikings around the millennium in 2014 of the Battle of Clontarf, the Education Department decided to work on a public programme of events, workshops and tours, and also three projects which would leave a legacy. The three legacy projects are: Expansion of the Viking Handling Collection of replica artefacts, the development of a new Activity Sheet for schools and families to explore the Museum's Viking Age Ireland exhibition and an online resource about Viking Ireland.

Before a brief was created for the development of an online resource, research was carried out in spring 2013 to find out what kind of resources teachers currently use in the classroom to teach pupils about the Vikings and what they think needs to be developed. An investigation of current resources online, a survey of all groups who had recently taken part in tours and workshops in the Museum that related to the Vikings and a survey with History Inspectors at Primary and Post-Primary Level of the Department of Education, showed that while good general information about the Vikings existed, particularly relating to the Vikings elsewhere in Europe, specific information about what archaeology can tell us about life in Viking Age Ireland and high definition images of artefacts in the Museum's collection were areas that teachers would like to see developed.

The Education Department hired McKenna films a young Irish film company to make the short films which would demonstrate how archaeology and artefacts can tell us about the past and to showcase key artefacts. The films were designed to be brief, around five minutes, to ensure they are succinct and appeal to young people.

Who are the films for?

The films can be viewed by any member of public but were created to explain to school pupils the archaeological evidence which we have for the Viking Age in Ireland. The themes were chosen to link in directly with strands of the school curricula.

Curriculum Links

Information and Communication Technologies is now a key strand across all subjects in the curricula. This film resource can be used as a means of integrating ICT into your classroom practice.

Links to Primary curriculum **English, SESE (History, Geography and Science)** and **Art**:

English:

- Receptiveness to language (*Listening to the dialogue in the videos and observing the gestures used by the speakers, using this information to understand the context.*)
- Competence and confidence in using language (*Learn new vocabulary related to the Vikings, History and Archaeology. The Glossary document that accompanies these Notes for Teachers may be useful for this.*)
- Emotional and imaginative development through language. (*Imagining what life was like in Viking Ireland, what kind of person could have owned an artefact like this?*)

SESE (History, Geography and Science):

Understanding the term 'environment'.

Exploration and Investigation: an understanding of significant events in the history of Ireland.

- **History:** A Sense of Time. (*How long ago did the Vikings live? The work of an Archaeologist. What is archaeology? How do we know that the objects that have been excavated are very old?*)
- **History:** Investigating the object. (*What is an artefact? Who made it? How old is it? How do we know? Drawing conclusions.*)
- **History:** Tools and Weapons. (*What kind of technologies did the Vikings develop?*)
- **History:** Buildings, sites or ruins in my locality. (*There are many Viking Age structures around Ireland. The films could be used to support the study of a building or monument in your local area. Have any archaeological excavations been taking place near your school?*)
- **History:** Integration, Change and Continuity. (*What is different about these artefacts? Is there anything that is the same as today?*)
- **History:** Empathy: (*What was it like to live in Viking Age Ireland?*)
- **Geography and Science:** A Sense of the World - Environments:
Human Environment (*Why did the Vikings choose to leave their own environment, Scandinavia, and travel to new countries?*)
Natural Environment (*What was the environment that they left like and how was it different from countries like Ireland where they settled?*)
Environment and Care: Physical environment (*Conservation of ancient heritage, wet conditions close to the river Liffey in central Dublin which preserved these artefacts.*)
- **Geography:** Maps, globes and graphical skills. (*The films could be used to discuss the location of the Scandinavian countries in relation to Ireland and the travel and trade routes used by the Vikings.*)
- **Science:** Language and Science. (*The films could be used to introduce vocabulary associated with science i.e. 'mineralised', 'corrode', the Glossary may be useful for this.*)

Art and Science: Design study. (*What are the motifs and features that we can see on these objects? What is the object made from? How was it made?*)

Links to Post-Primary curriculum **History, Geography, Science, Art, Craft and Design/ History and Appreciation of Art**:

- **History:** Primary and secondary sources, what is the difference? What can they tell us about life in Viking Age Ireland? The work of a historian. The work of an archaeologist.

- **History:** How did people live in the past?
- **History:** Chronology
- **Science - Chemistry:** The materials that make up the world around us. How materials can change and be changed. (*Iron Viking Age sword corrodes over time, wood that become mineralised*)
- **Art, Craft and Design:** Investigate artefacts by looking carefully at them to understand what materials and processes were used to design and manufacture these objects.
- **History and Appreciation of Art:**
 - Section I - Art in Ireland (from Prehistoric times to the present)
 - Section II - European Art (from 1000 A. D. to the present).

(Video 8 – The Legacy of the Vikings in Ireland examines the artistic legacy of the Vikings in Ireland, with a specific focus on the Ringerike and Urnes art styles.)
- **Metalwork:** Techniques and design. Materials and Technology.
- **Materials Technology (Wood):** Materials/ Wood Science. Elements of Destruction/Conservation.

Where to discover information about the exhibitions in which the artefacts are displayed

The majority of artefacts discussed in the films are on display at the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology. Each exhibition has a section on the Museum website, and some of these artefacts are explained in detail on those webpages.

Video

The Arrival of the Vikings and Beliefs

Viking Women in Ireland

The Irish and the Vikings

Daily Life in Viking Ireland

The Legacy of the Vikings in Ireland

Exhibition

Viking Age Ireland

Viking Age Ireland

Viking Age Ireland

Viking Age Ireland

The Treasury, Viking Age Ireland, Medieval Ireland

Glossary

(Note: The words highlighted in the scripts of the video are those explained in this Glossary)

Arrival of the Vikings and Beliefs

Shield boss –Viking Age shields were made from wood but with a raised central area, or ‘boss’ of iron, which protected the hand holding the shield. The metal boss is usually the only part of a Viking Age shield that survives.

Artefact – A man-made ornament, tool or other object.

Ringed-pin – A type of metal pin used to fasten clothes, it originated in Ireland but spread throughout the Viking World. Like the penannular brooch, it is made up of two elements, a ring which is attached to a long pin. Unlike the penannular brooch, the ring is much smaller and has no gap to allow the pin to pass through. See picture below:



Isotope Analysis – Different geological areas have different types of isotopes. During a person’s childhood, isotopes from the local environment are absorbed from water and gather in their teeth and bones. Hundreds and sometimes thousands of years later, archaeologists can closely examine the isotopes in the remains of the teeth or bones of a person who lived long ago and match them to an area to find out where the person spent the early years of their life.

Viking Women in Ireland

Grave fields – Cemetery, burial ground.

Pinafore – A dress with no sleeves and wide shoulder straps. It is usually worn over a dress as an apron.

Gilded – An object which is covered in a thin layer of gold.

Silver inlay –A pattern carved or engraved into the surface of an object and then filled with silver.

Casket – A small box, usually used to keep valuable objects in.

The Irish and the Vikings

Ringfort – A farmstead which has a dry stone wall or a bank of earth built around it.

Palisade – A fence made from wooden stakes, usually built around a settlement as a defence.

Crannóg – An artificial island, built on a river and lakes, used as a homestead. It was sometimes linked to the mainland by a wooden bridge.

Hiberno-Norse – People who have both Scandinavian and Irish ancestors. Many of the Vikings (or Norse) who came to live in Ireland married Irish people, so their children and grandchildren were Hiberno-Norse. *Hibernia* is the Latin name for Ireland.

Daily Life in Viking Ireland

Post and wattle – A form of construction made from wooden posts through which wattles (thin branches) are woven. These panels could be used upright to create walls of houses and fences or could be laid down flat to form floors or paths.

Type 1 Viking House – The most common type of building known from Viking Dublin, dating from around 900 to 1200. They were rectangular with rounded corners, had thatched roofs and a doorway in each of the short sides. The passageway between these doors divided the inside of the house into three parts. The two areas on either side of the central passageway were used as beds or for storage. At the centre of the house was an open fireplace or hearth.

Amber – A hard translucent material, usually orange or yellow in colour, made from fossilised tree resin and used in the manufacture of jewellery. Amber is not found naturally in Ireland but it is found in the area around the Baltic Sea in Scandinavia and must therefore have been imported to Ireland by Viking traders.

Scramasax – A type of knife or dagger. *Seax* is the old English word for a knife.

Scabbard – see the Glossary for Video 2 above.

Forge – A blacksmith's workshop.

Bacáns or Pintles – An L-shaped pin or bolt fastened to a door which allows the door to open (type of hinge).

Trident – A tool with three prongs.

Reaper's bill – A tool with a curved blade used in farming or forestry to cut small branches.

Prick spurs – A metal fitting designed to be worn on the heels of riding boots with a single sharp spike or point used to urge horses to run faster.

Stirrups – Rings of metal that are attached to the saddle of a horse by straps and used to hold the feet of a rider.

The Legacy of the Vikings in Ireland

Ringerike Style – A late Viking art style which takes its name from a type of sandstone found near Oslo in Norway bearing decoration in this style. Ringerike motifs sometimes show two animals that are interlinked in a figure of eight shape, with curling tendrils. This style was used in Ireland between 1000 and 1100.

Urnes Style – This Viking art style is named after a wooden church built on a remote farm in western Norway around 1130. The outer walls of the church are decorated with beautiful motifs showing a great beast in combat with thin-bodied snakes. This style was used in Ireland between 1050 and 1150.

Crozier – A staff carried by senior churchmen to show their authority. They were originally made from wood but were usually covered with a decorated metal casing.

Foliage motif – Leaf pattern.

Arrival of Vikings and Beliefs

Speaker: Maeve Sikora, Keeper of Irish Antiquities, National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology

This burial was discovered in 1934 when the War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge in Dublin were being laid out, and the location of Islandbridge is very significant for our understanding of Vikings in Ireland because it's this area that contains the largest Viking cemetery outside of Scandinavia. This burial itself represents an adult male; a warrior that was buried with his sword and a spearhead, so we can deduce from this that he was a pagan, Scandinavian who believed that, you know, his weapons were needed for his journey to the afterlife.

We know that Vikings buried themselves in a pagan manner up to about the middle of the 10th century, so we can suggest that this burial dates to between about 850 and 950 AD. This burial is very significant because it's actually one of the earliest preserved skeletons that we have of these Viking burials. There were many discovered in the 1800s; however it wasn't felt that human remains were valued as, you know, scientific objects of that time. We now know how much information we can glean from human remains.

In the case here we have a range of weapons that are traditionally associated with male Viking burials: swords, spearheads, axe-heads, and **shield bosses** which are the central part of the warrior's shield where the wood and leather haven't survived. All of these were found in the grave fields of Kilmainham and Islandbridge, where the earliest Viking warriors were buried.

These **artefacts** are the most recently discovered Viking artefacts from the Viking cemetery in Islandbridge in Dublin and the sword and spear head we can see here were found in 2007. Then the site was excavated subsequently by National Museum staff and this **ringed pin** and human remains were discovered on the site. The sword is important because it's an example of a single-edged sword, which is an early type of sword and we know that these swords date to about the ninth century, which gives us an idea of the date of this burial. The spear head is important because it was damaged or bent at the time of burial. It was effectively decommissioned or put beyond use before it was placed in the grave. The human remains that were discovered during the excavation have been analysed and show that the individual was an adult male who was aged between 18 and 20 at the time of his death. And **isotope analysis** which is a type of analysis carried out on tooth enamel has indicated that he grew up outside Ireland and came to Ireland in the couple of years before his death.

Women in Viking Age Ireland

Speaker: Maeve Sikora, Keeper of Irish Antiquities, National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology

The objects in this case are objects that are associated with Scandinavian women. We see oval brooches that are on display here in pairs, which are the most common artefact known to be found with Viking women. These were found in Dublin in the **grave fields** of Kilmainham and Islandbridge. They were worn in pairs on the person. They were associated with traditional Scandinavian dress which would have been a **pinafore**-style dress, they would have had a practical function of holding up the straps. They also would have worn glass beads in a string in the centre of the brooches. Women were also buried with other objects such as the whalebone plaque that we can see here, which is a highly decorated and exotic object that would also have indicated the status or the wealth of the person who it was buried with. Whalebone plaques would also be associated with the textile production; which is a traditionally female role in Scandinavian society. It was probably used to smooth linen or other textiles. And it would have been used with this glass smoother that is on display to the right of it.

The earlier Vikings who came to Dublin were pagan so unlike Christians, they believed it was important for you to have your worldly possessions on you for your journey to the afterlife. So these artefacts represent a pair of oval brooches which were a traditional Scandinavian dress ornament for women. They were discovered in 2004, one of them complete and one fragmentary, during archaeological excavations near a church site at Finglas in North West County Dublin. It's a more or less unique type of brooch. We know that in Norway they date to the ninth century AD so this gives us an indication of the date of the burial at Finglas. But it's also important because of the high quality of decoration on the brooch, we can see that it's **gilded** and it has **silver inlay** and has very unusual animal ornaments representing bears and bear heads. The burial contained the body of an adult female, she was aged between twenty five and thirty five at the time of death. She was also buried with a comb and a **casket**. The brooches were used to fasten the straps of her dress which was a traditional Scandinavian style pinafore dress she was buried in.

The Irish and the Vikings

Speaker: Eamonn Kelly, Former Keeper of Irish Antiquities, National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology

While the Vikings developed an urban commercial lifestyle in Ireland engaging in trade and manufacture, the Irish continued to be a predominantly a rural agricultural society. However the Vikings provided markets for agricultural surplus and probably a lot of cattle and leather and so on were probably sold into the Dublin market. During this period we also notice an increase in the number of sheep that were kept by the Irish. This suggests that there was an increase in wool production and that relates to the fact that the Vikings provided the market for the wool which then was manufactured into textiles and would have been exported to Britain and elsewhere.

Now the Irish at the period they lived in **ringforts** which are enclosed settlements, enclosed by a bank and ditch with a **palisade** on top. They also lived in **crannógs** and a crannóg is a similar palisaded dwelling expect placed on an artificial platform in a lake. The types of material that turns up on these sites right across the country in fact, is remarkably similar to what you would find if you dig in a Viking town. Because through the interaction between the Vikings and the Irish a common culture has emerged, a common material culture has emerged which we refer to as **Hiberno-Norse**. You get the same range of tools the same types of decorations the same types of brooches and personal ornaments and so on.

This is not-withstanding the fact that the Irish would have spoken a different language; they would have had a different legal system and social organisation and so on. But I think gradually the Vikings were drawn into Irish life.

The Vikings were extremely well armed. When they arrived in Ireland it must have been a shock because the Irish were confronted with vastly superior weapons, Viking swords like we see here and the fighting axes. These were vastly superior to what the Irish had available to them and very quickly the Irish acquired these weapons. We know from the sword that was found here in a crannóg at Ballinderry, this is an imported sword that came from the continent through Viking commerce.

One of the interesting objects we have here from here in Ballinderry is a gaming board, on which a game called *hnefatafl* was played. It's a game were you moved pieces around on the board, not unlike chess, more like drafts perhaps. This board was decorated with Viking style art. This was maybe something that was picked up on a shopping expedition to Dublin or perhaps it's a diplomatic gift from Dublin to an important local dignitary or maybe it has come as part of a dowry because we know there was inter-marriage as well between the Irish and the Vikings. We have the Irish beginning to adopt Scandinavian names and vice versa.

When Irish kings went to war they captured prisoners of war, what would you do with then? Did you just kill them? Well when the Vikings came along they set up slave emporiums in Dublin, Waterford and Limerick where you could buy and sell slaves. So this was another source of wealth for Irish kings at the end of a campaign, all your prisoners were hauled off to Dublin and sold on the slave market. We have records of Irish kings being captured sold as slaves and so on. And we even have records of some of these guys escaping and coming home to tell the story. They could have ended up anywhere from Scandinavia to North Africa.

Daily Life in Viking Ireland.

Speaker: Dr Patrick Wallace, Former Director, National Museum of Ireland

People often ask 'Which are the great urban sites of middle to late Viking Age Europe?' Well, definitely there are two in Ireland, there's Dublin and Waterford. Dublin and Waterford each have tremendous preservation qualities. Dublin runs from the 840s up to end of the Viking period and beyond into the Anglo-Norman phase. In archaeological terms, it is extraordinarily rich and very well preserved. We were lucky because of our open-plan excavations in Wood Quay, to be able to take a wide sloop, of such an important, well preserved, you know all the organic remains in their layers because of the water-logging. Everything is preserved, if you dropped a bus ticket, there weren't buses, but if you dropped one in Viking Dublin it would be preserved, so good was the wet damp conditions. So everything, we found bedding from the houses which was still green after a thousand years.

The single main importance of our discovery has to do with the contribution of these excavations to our understanding of the European town. The origins, genesis, of the early Middle Ages town of Europe is here. If you look at the lines here of basketry or **post and wattle** between each of the individual plots, these are segments, long oblongs. They are individual plots with gateways in from the main street: Fishamble Street. This is a reproduction in model form 1:100 of what we found on the Fishamble Street side of Wood Quay; a series of buildings respecting one another within their plots. So it's the kind of sociological sub-division of the overall space of the town. It's a town not a village.

The second important thing about Wood Quay was the evidence we uncovered for the defences. The defences, the earthen banks, which surrounded the town protecting it from the seaward side but that bank went right around the whole town with its palisade on top.

This is an example of one of the two hundred buildings we found in the Fishamble Street/ Wood Quay excavations. It shows the characteristics of the principal type of house. There were six types of buildings in Viking Dublin, this is the main type, 75%, three quarters of all buildings, conform to my **Type 1**. This is Type 1. So it's three-aisled, there is a long division of the floor space into a wide central aisle going up the middle and then two raised aisles at the sides. Now those doubled as beds and seats. You can imagine say a Viking household sitting around, not crouched; it was a dignified medieval society, sitting around that stone kerbed fire place, with the ash still in position. We found the ash of generations on top of one another in our excavations.

So you have a wide door, you have the pathway up to the door, you have a lobby inside you have a wide lintel on top there supporting the spars of a hipped gable. And then you have got the rafters, the confirmation of the rafters and a smoke hole, no chimney.

As a continuity from the fireplace that we looked at in the Type 1 house, here is a soot-encrusted stone bowl. That soot is from a fire that burned in a house like that a thousand years ago. Other items here of import to Dublin, raw materials include this walrus skull with the ivory of the walrus coming down, which was cut up and used in Dublin. And also **amber**, there was a great amber working tradition in Dublin. We have 3000 pieces of amber in Dublin, which is the second highest of any Viking settlement in Europe. There is a strong English link in Viking Dublin, I've always said that. And this **scramaseax scabbard**, it's a leather scabbard which contained a knife, a lethal weapon. That has an English man's name carved on the side of it, he took the trouble to carve Edric, that was his name, *EDRIC ME FECE*, 'Edric made me', made that object. That green sliver of stone here, is a piece of marble from an altar in Rome. The Vikings had gone there from Dublin on pilgrimage. They came back and they brought that with them as a souvenir of a trip to Rome in the first quarter probably, of the eleventh century, maybe within a decade of the battle of Clontarf.

There were so many trades in Dublin it is very difficult to pick any one craftsman's group. The blacksmith was the only man who made his own tools and he also made tools for everyone else. And we will start with this lovely **forge** tongs with these square jaws, obviously Irish-made, we found it in the foundations of a house in Fishamble Street. It

would be used on the fire of a forge at the time. For an ordinary door, you had those **bacáns** or L-shaped **pintles**, which are driven in to hold up a door. Other items here you have a **trident**, a flesh hook, for picking meat out of a pot. You have a **reaper's bill** there for cutting and you have a fish hook. All the trades, craftsmen were fed from the iron worker.

Now the horse was always associated with the blacksmith and rightly so, but here from our excavations in Wood Quay, is the first evidence we have in Ireland, that we can date, of the use of spurs and a **stirrup**. These spurs are a pair, they are tinned, it's iron of course, and they are **prick spurs**, they are to give the horse a little dig. Here then, is a stirrup, Scandinavian type with a twist, small foot part because the shoes of the time (the footwear), is of quite a small size, very light so that the toe of the person that went into that would have been quite dainty. But also the shoe would have been very dainty. There is no way a modern person's shoe or foot could go into a stirrup like that but it is the first evidence we have that is datable for the use of spurs and a stirrup in this country.

The Legacy of the Vikings in Ireland

Speaker: Ragnall O’Floinn, Former Director, National Museum of Ireland

The Vikings who settled in Ireland, settled largely in the towns, towns such as Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, Limerick and Cork. They never at any stage formed a particularly large proportion of the population and by the tenth century they had integrated, by and large with the local population and these people of mixed Irish and Scandinavian origin we know as Hiberno-Norse. They settled in the towns and they had by that stage, they had established trading networks, with Britain, with the continent and with Scandinavia. They therefore had a disproportionate influence on economic and artistic life in Ireland at the time. Artistically their influence didn’t really show in terms of the Scandinavian art styles until the eleventh and into the twelfth centuries. By which stage, as I said, they had become Christians and the two most influential Viking art styles of the period are the late Viking art styles known as the **Ringerike** and the **Urnes** style, the Ringerike style becoming popular in Denmark particularly and then in England, through the Danish king, Canute [sometimes spelled *Cnut*] and through England to Ireland probably through Dublin. This is represented by a number of objects, wooden objects from the Dublin excavations but particularly by a number of important ecclesiastical objects such as the **Crozier** of Clonmacnoise, which on the crook, which is the curved top of the object, has an inlaid pattern of interlaced snakes in the Ringerike style. These are slightly abstract animals with their bodies crossing over one another in interlaced knots with **foliage** motifs and curves and spirals at the end.

This is a shrine to enclose a book, known as the *Cathach*, a manuscript believed to have been made by Saint Colmcille himself, Saint Columba himself. It was made, probably in Kells, and what is of significance is that it has an inscription which names a number of individuals which allows us to date it to around about the 1060s, between 1060 and 1090. It also contains the name of the craftsman who made it, a man called *Sitric mac Meic Aeda*. What is significant there is that his first name is Scandinavian and his surname is Irish, so he is obviously of mixed Irish and Scandinavian ancestry. And then if we look at the decoration of the eleventh century portion of the shrine on the narrow ends, you see a panel at the end consisting of two back-to-back figure of eight animals with tightly interlaced ornament and also curled foliage extensions which are typical of the Viking Ringerike style, another version of the Irish Ringerike style.

What is even more interesting is that in the course of the Dublin Excavations at High Street in Dublin in the 1960s, a bone trial or motif piece was found, a small piece of animal bone carved with an almost identical pattern of back-to-back animals found in an eleventh century level and probably of the same style as that found here on the *Cathach*.

After the Ringerike style the most popular style then that came into Ireland was the Urnes style towards the end of the eleventh century and this is best exemplified by the Cross of Cong here which dates to the first quarter of the twelfth century. The Cross of Cong was a processional cross which was made to contain a relic of the true cross brought to Ireland in the year 1123. It was commissioned by the High King of Ireland at the time Turlough O’Connor and the relic would originally have been visible inside the rock crystal at the centre of the cross. What is of interest, in this particular case, is that the Cross of Cong is probably the best example in metalwork of the late Viking art style known as the Urnes art style. Unlike the earlier Ringerike style, the Urnes style does not use the same plant motifs but is based largely on this great beast motif of a large thick-bodied animal in combat, if you like, with one or more snakes. This is seen here on the front of the Cross of Cong, in the individual panels where you see one or more large animals interlaced with thin wire-like snakes, this symbolizing, if you like, the struggle between good and evil which would be appropriate for an object of this type. The Irish version of the Urnes style differs from that in Scandinavia in that it is far more disciplined and far more symmetrical. The arrangement of the curves of the thin-bodied snakes is much more symmetrical often around a central point. The best example of this is probably to be found on the sides of the Shrine of St. Patrick’s Bell which, dates to around about the year 1100.