

Pre-Christian Ireland

C. 4000 BC - AD 500

Poul nabrone portal
dolmen. Burren
Co.Clare



Newgrange c. 3200 BC



THE STONE AGE
4000-2000 BC

The Broighter Collar
c. 50 BC



The Turoe Stone



THE IRON AGE
c. 500 BC-AD 400

Before Pre-Christian Ireland

The Palaeolithic Period
c. 10500-4000 BC

Pre-Christian Ireland

THE BRONZE AGE
c. 2000-500 BC



Lunula. Ross, Co.
Westmeath



The Gleninsheen Gorget

After Pre-Christian
Ireland

Insular Art
AD 500-1100

Before the period - Palaeolithic Period C. 10500 - 4000 BC

- According to The national museum of Ireland “No clear evidence has yet emerged to demonstrate the presence of humankind in Ireland during the Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) period, a time during which much of Ireland was covered by ice sheets”
- By around 7000 BC Irish settlers lived by hunting and gathering their food source (wild pigs, gathering wild plants and shellfish, and fishing in lakes, rivers and the sea).
- Living near water sources (sea/ rivers) was essential for easy food access.
- Farming developed in the Middle East from c. 9000 BC but did not reach Ireland until c. 4000 BC.

Context - The Stone Age C. 4000 - 2000 BC

- The first Irish farmers arrived in Ireland around 4000 BC - Known as the *Neolithic* period. (Neo= New / Lithic = Stone)
- They arrived in the North-East of the country where it would have been the easiest route from Scotland.
- They brought over their animals and seeds meaning they had substantial boats/rafts.
- They spread across the country over the next hundred of years. Dwelling and burial sites are found country wide.



What were the effects of farming?

- Permanent settlements meant they had more time to decorate and invent.
- Domestication of animals meant they had more time for leisure since they weren't hunting for food.
- The beginning of pagan 'Religion' introduced belief in the afterlife and burial rituals.

Innovation and Invention - The Stone Age C. 4000 - 2000 BC

- There were no examples for the Irish farmers to work from so everything they created was invented by them.
- Wood and stone were the only materials available for tools and weapons.
- Flint could be broken and shaped to produce sharp edges (Knives, arrowheads, spears, chisel).
- Flint was also used to incise decorative design into stones/pottery.



Polished stone spearhead from Cloonarragh, Co. Roscommon.



Javelin head of chert found in a bog at Kellysgrove, Co. Galway.



Axe of jadeite from Paslickstown, Co. Westmeath, an exotic import from alpine Italy probably reserved for ceremonial use.

Art elements and Design Principles - The Stone Age C. 4000 - 2000 BC

- These designs were incised (cuts / scratched using sharp flint) using simple line and dots.
- 5 = incised using curved lines
- 5= incised using straight lines
- They were incised on stones used in burial sites or pots they used for food.



Concentric circles



Spirals



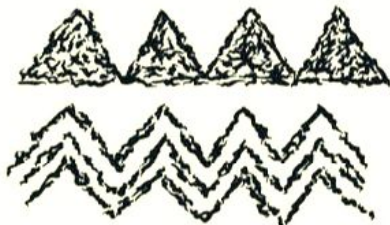
Arcs



Serpentiniforms



Dot in circle



Chevrons



Lozenges



Radials



Parallel lines



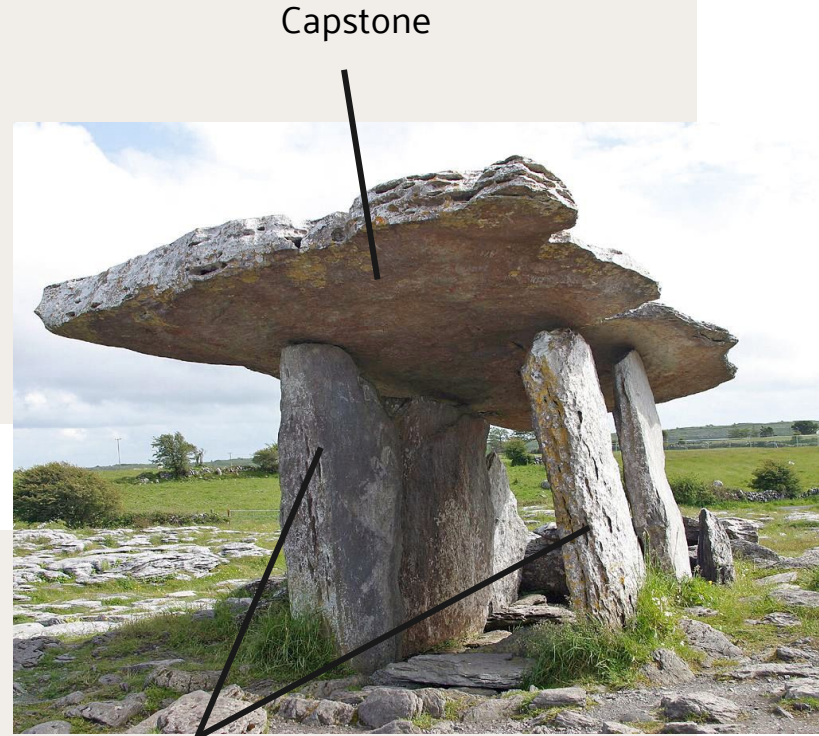
Offsets

Artists and artworks - The Stone Age C. 4000 - 2000 BC

- The neolithic built large structures for ritual and burial ceremonies which stand remaining today.
- The extra food that farming produced meant that they had more time to spend and plan out big structures to commemorate the dead.

Burial Structures and Monuments - Dolmens

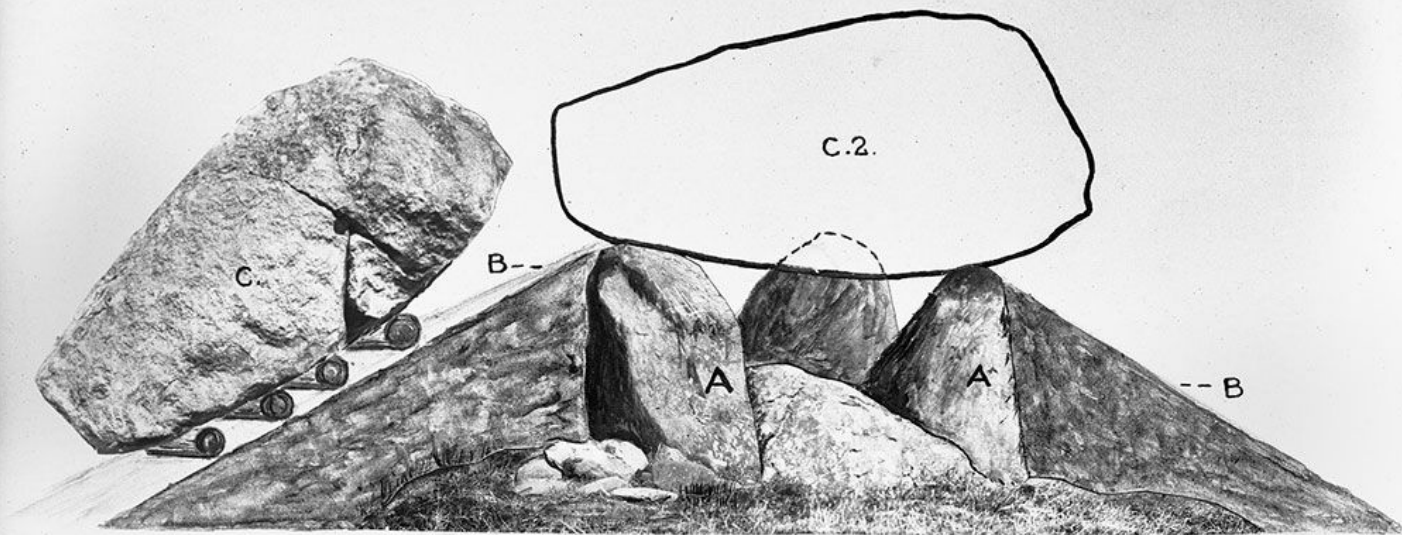
- They are the simplest megalithic tomb (Mega= Large / Lithic = stone)
- Human remains from cremations + artefacts were found within them.
- The back stones are lower than the front suggesting that the Cap stone was dragged up an earthen ramp.



Capstone

Portal
Stones

Poul nabrone portal dolmen. Burren Co. Clare



SUPPOSED METHOD OF CONSTRUCTING A CROMLEAC

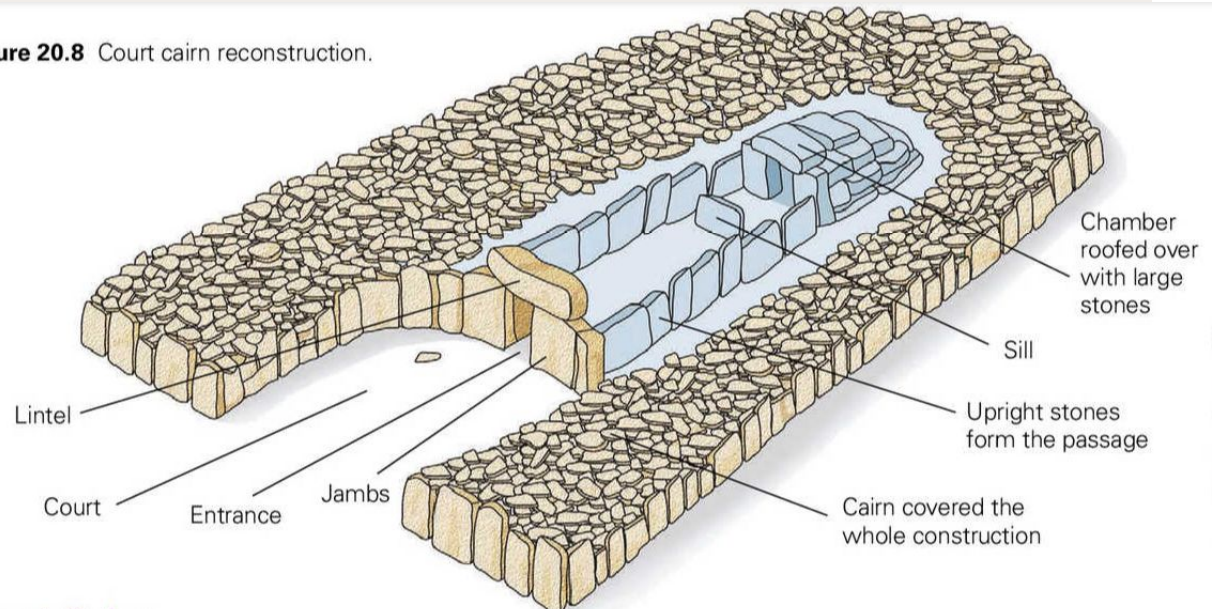
- A. Standing Stones.
- B. Sloping Mound of Earth afterwards removed
- C. Cap Stone. C.2. In final position. W.G. 16X.

Artists and Artwork - Court Cairns (Burial Chamber inside a mound)

- Places of burial , ceremonies and rituals were held.
- A covered chamber inside the cairn was divided with stills creating doorways between the spaces.
- Outside there is a semi-circular entrance (Court) which created a formal entrance to the Cairn .

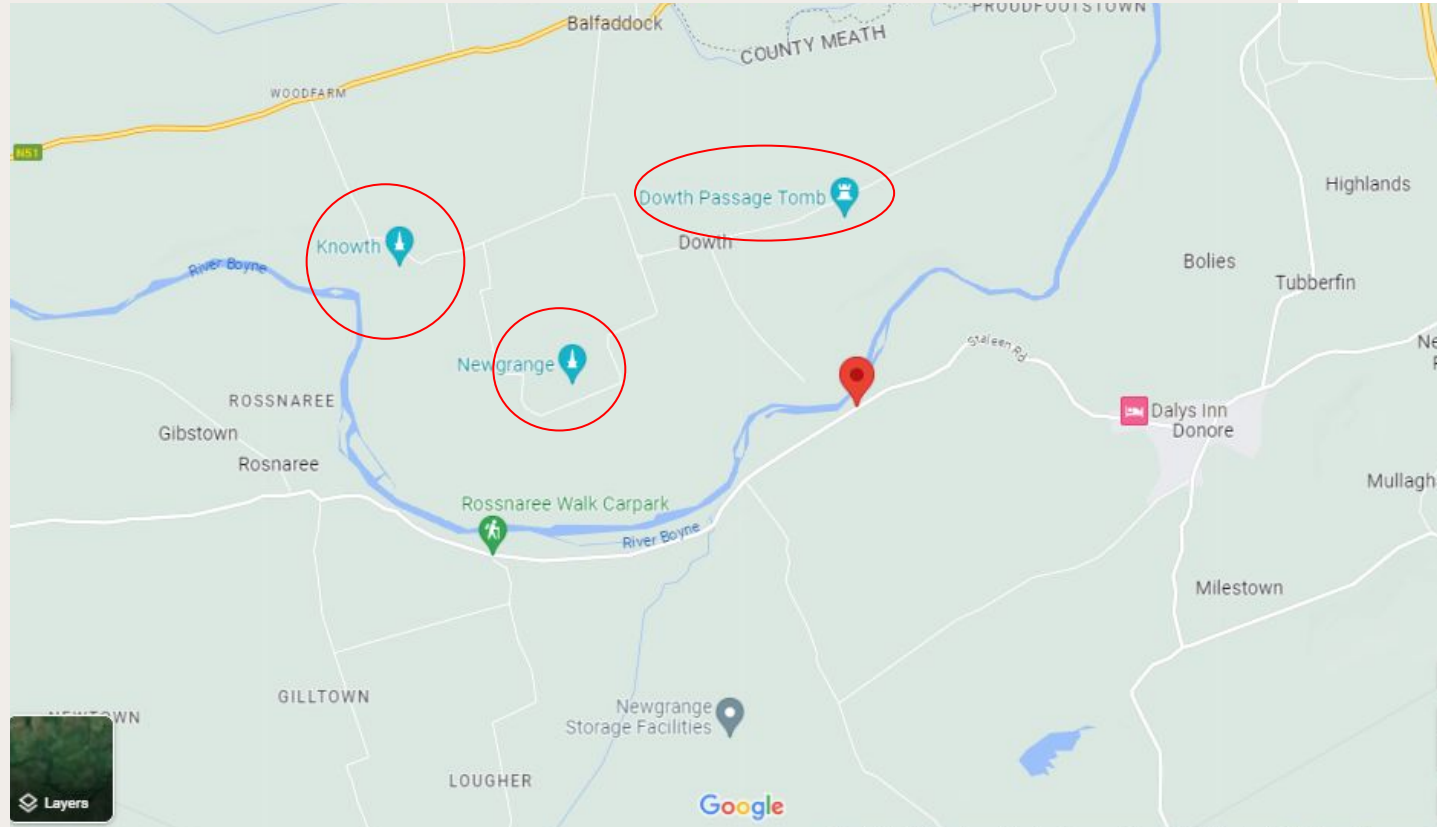


Figure 20.8 Court cairn reconstruction.



Artists and Artwork -Brú na Bóinne

**Placement of
monuments along the
bend of the Boyne**



Artists and Artwork - Brú na Bóinne

Brú na Bóinne -Describes an area where the river Boyne Meanders into a bend and is one of the worlds most important archaeological landscapes.

- 3 Passage tombs are dominated in the area ; Knowth / Dowth /Newgrange
- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has designated it as a world heritage site (Universal value to humanity)

The importance of the River

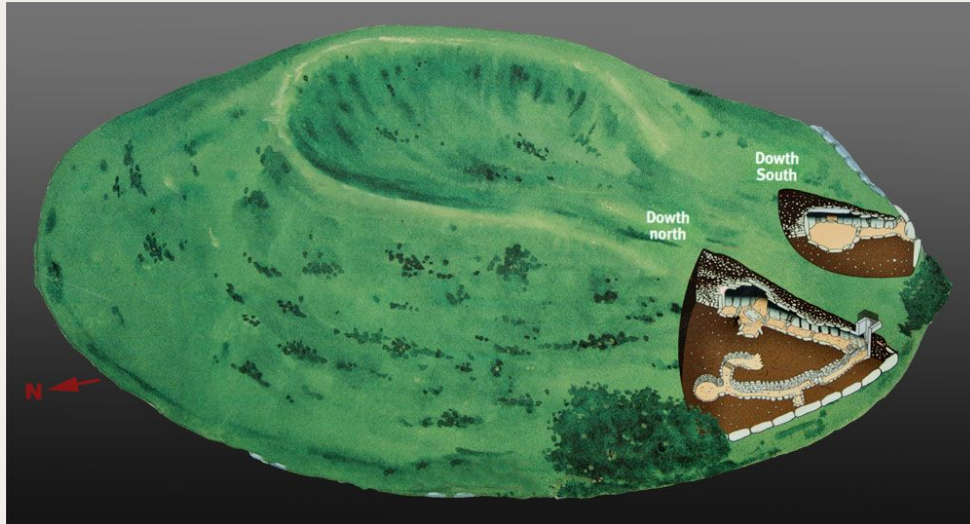
- Provided Transport and communication.
- Served as fresh water source (Cleaning + drinking)
- Migration of salmon (Food)



Artists and Artwork - Passage Tomb

What is a Passage Tomb ?

- Called Passage tombs = Structure consists of a narrow passage ending in a small chamber where human remains were found.
- The passage and chamber is completely covered in a cairn (Circular mound of stones) where it is enclosed by a series of kerbstones.

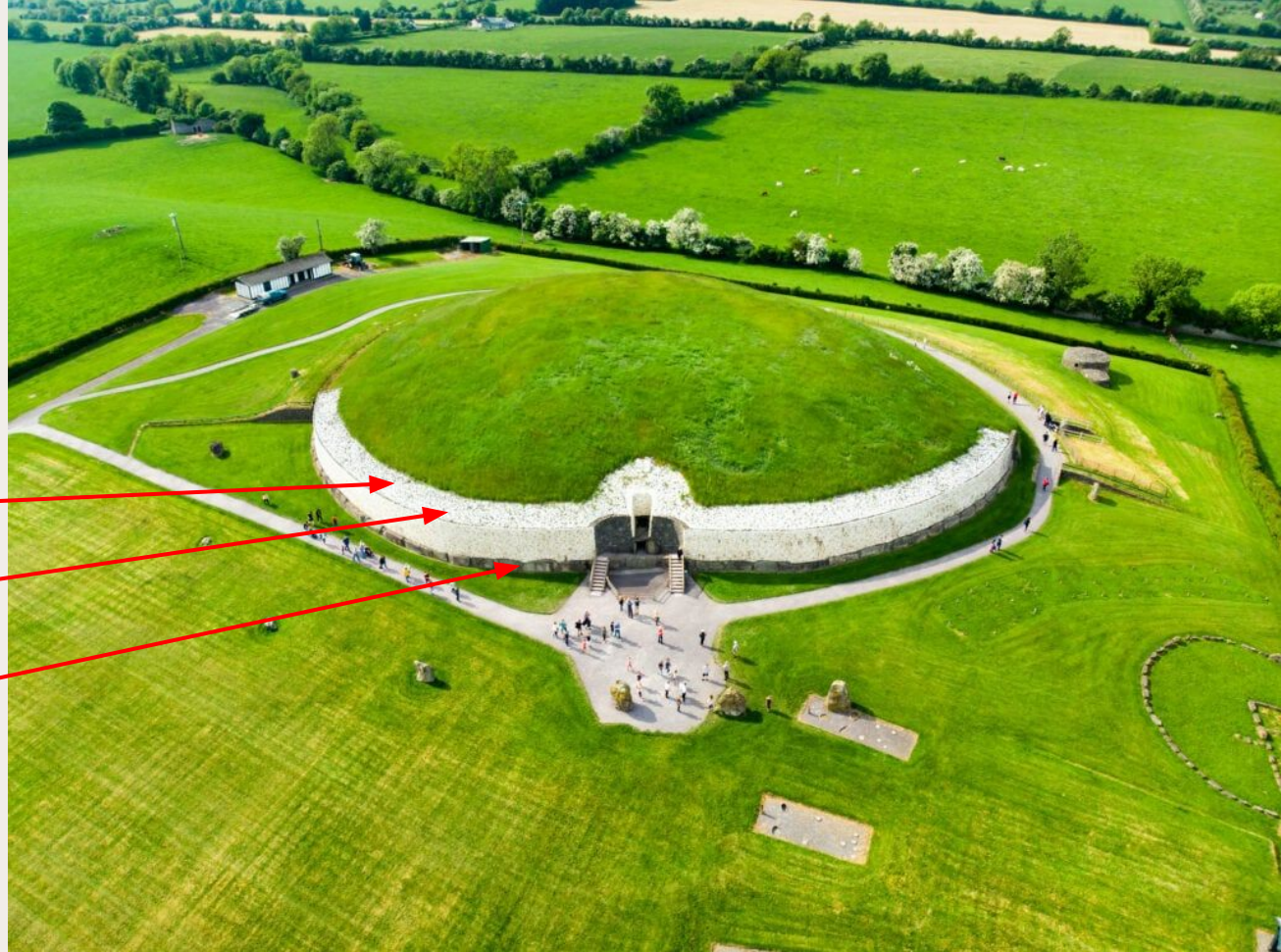


Artists and Artwork - Passage Mounds (Graves)

Newgrange c. 3200 BC.
Bru na Boinne, Co. Meath.

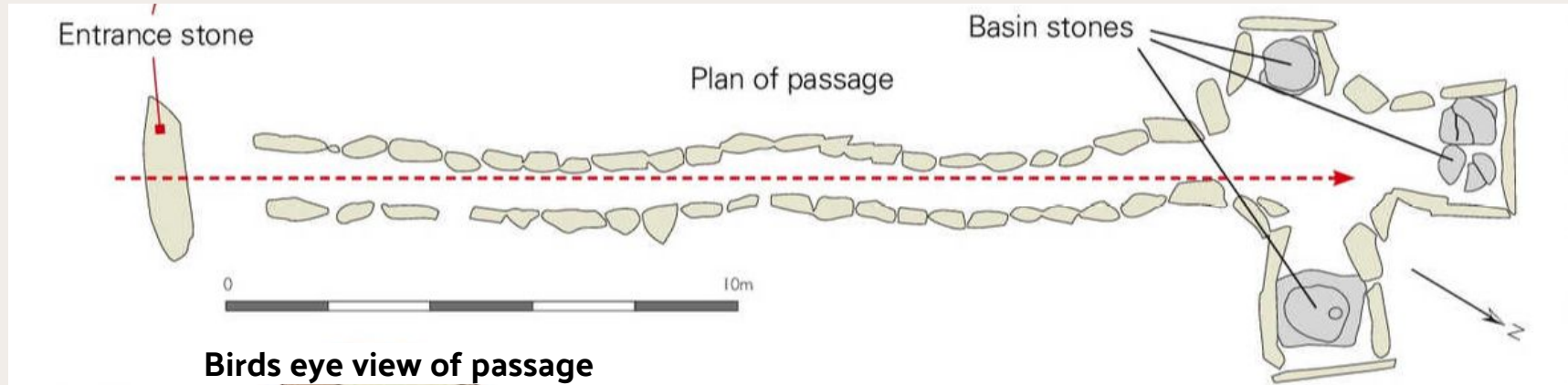
Quartz Stones

- At the front of the structure, Newgrange has a wall of white quartz stones and grey granite stones standing on a row of kerbstones.



Artists and Artwork - Passage Mounds (Graves)

- It has a passage of 18.7m long formed by 22 upright stones on the left (orthostats) and 21 on the right.
- The passage is roofed with flat stones throughout the passage.



Artists and Artwork - Passage Mounds (Graves)

- Once you come close to the chamber the roof is corbelled.
- Corbelled vaults were built on the standing stones of the chamber.
- The stones would decrease gradually as the corbelled vault grew slightly sloped inwards.
- The chamber is 6m in diameter and 6m tall.
- It has 3 **recesses** creating a cruciform shape.
- In each recess there is a basin that contain human ashes from cremations.

Figure 20.1

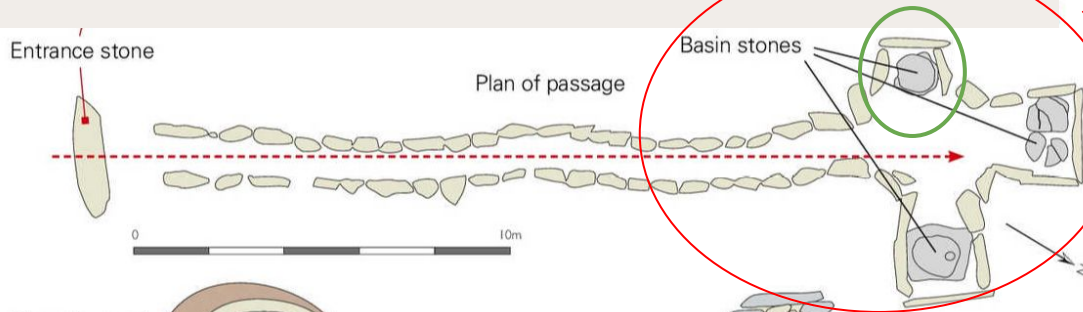
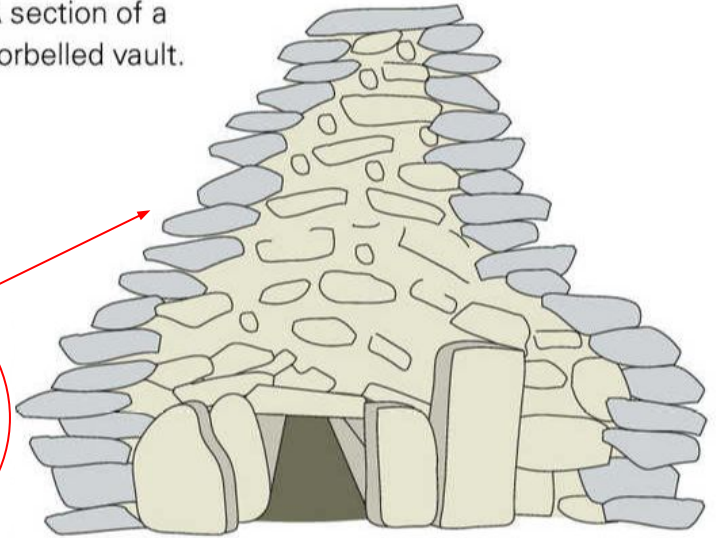
A section of a corbelled vault.

Entrance stone

Plan of passage

Basin stones

0 10m



Artists and Artwork - Passage Mounds (Graves)

Decorated stones

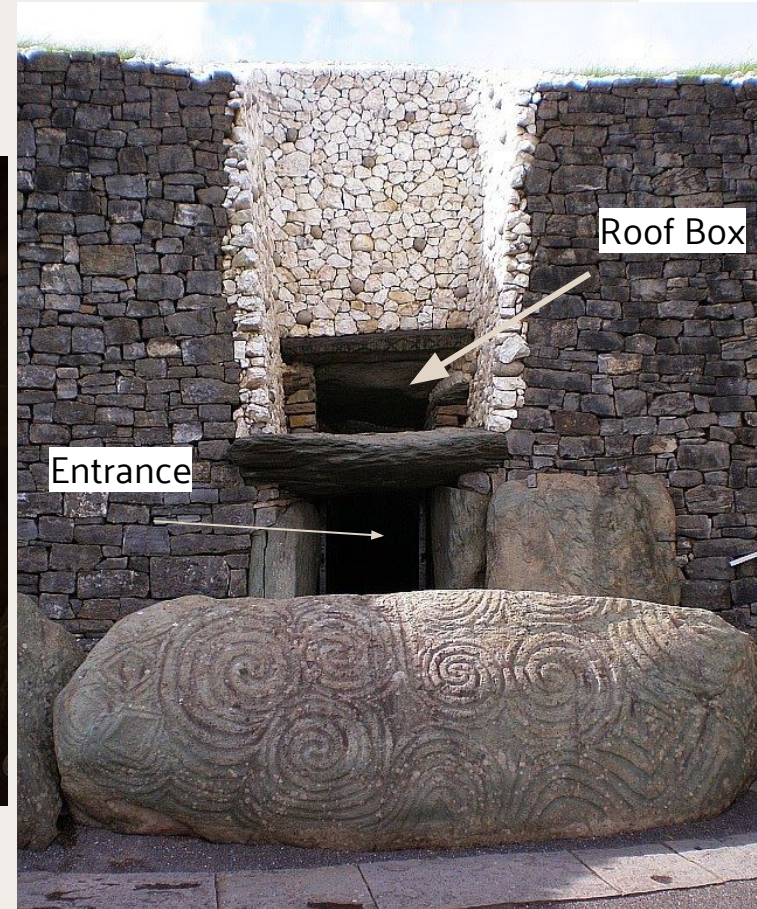
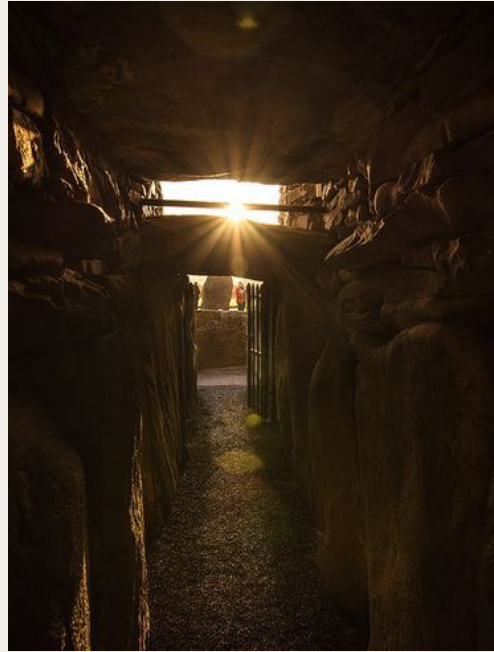
- There are 97 decorated stones that surrounded Newgrange.
 - The **entrance stone** is covered in curvilinear patterns.
 - A groove at the top centre lines up with the roof box.
 - On the left there is a **triple spiral** with **lozenges** at the side.
 - On the right there are **double spirals** which sit in between wave patterns that connect to the triple spiral. On the right there are **zigzags**, **curves** and **lozenges** as well.
-
- **Kerbstone 52** as multiple types of patterns.
 - Divided by the groove in the centre, the upper part of the left side consists of **double spirals**, **a small spiral** and **arcs**.
 - Below **lozenges** have been carved in giving raised outlines.
 - The right side consists of ovals raised by incising thick lines with **3 cup marks**. A series of **arcs** connects these ovals.



Artists and Artwork - Passage Mounds (Graves)

Layout and the Roof Box

- The layout began with the passage to orientate it with the light of the sun and the moon.
- The roof box over the entrance of Newgrange allows the sun to shine down along the passage into the chamber specifically on the 21st of December (Midwinter Solstice).



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After Pre-Christian Ireland

Insular Art
AD 500-1100

Context / Invention + Innovation - The Bronze Age c. 2000–500 BC



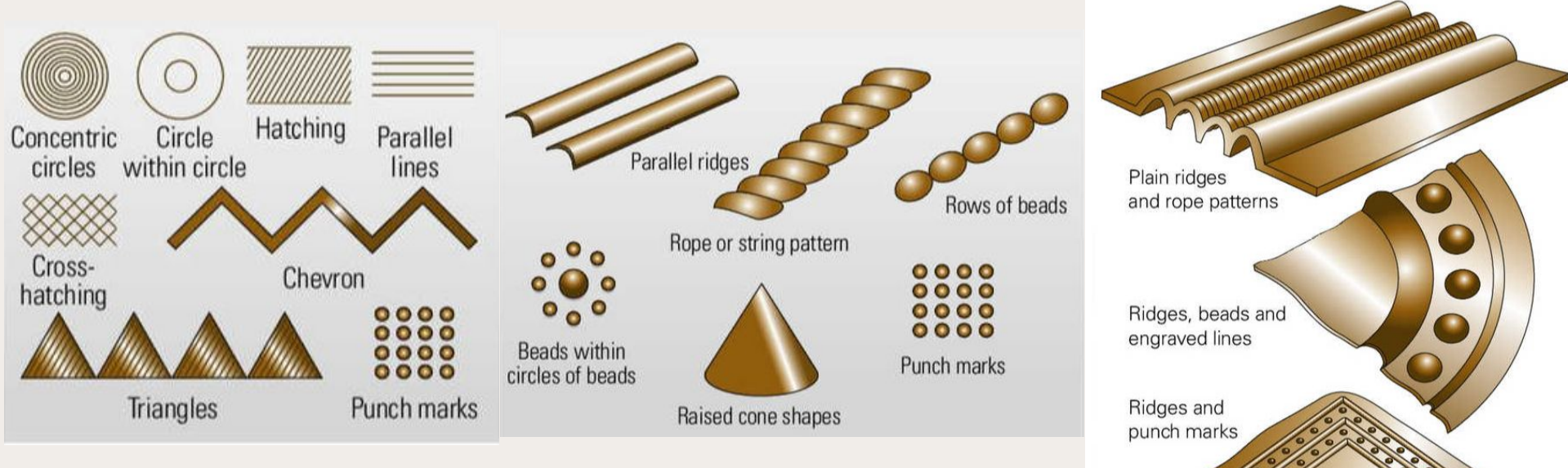
- A change in style from the stone age to the bronze age suggest people from mainland Europe to search for copper and gold.
- Gold and copper started being traded into Ireland from Britain and Europe showing link to the wider European community .
- The great Civilizations of Egypt , Babylonia and Assyria developed walled cities and figurative art but had not yet reached Ireland during the Bronze Age.
- Gold was found by panning alluvial deposits(Material deposited by rivers) in rivers, which were then melted and used for decorative objects.
- Copper was mined by roasting ore-bearing rock with fire and crackling it by throwing cold water on it. The pieces with the highest concentration of copper oxides would be smelted over charcoal fire and cast for axes, knives and other tools. Bronze (Copper + Tin) eventually replaced copper for tools as it was harder and held a sharp edge longer



Figure 21.3 Early Bronze Age objects.

Art Elements and Design Principles - The Bronze Age c. 2000–500 BC

- The same as the stone age , the bronze age use simple geometric designs and shapes to create their patterns. They used these shapes to create a more cohesive design.



Artists and artworks - The Bronze Age c. 2000–500 BC

The Early Bronze Age 2500-1500 BC

Decorated Gold Objects - Lunula Ross, Co. Westmeath

- **Form:** Made to look like a **crescent moon** shape, the lunula got its name from the word luna meaning moon.
- **Function:** Worn as a neck collar to show status.
- **Technique :** The patterns were created using the **Incision Technique** = Cut into the front surface using a **scriber** (pencil shape bronze tool) to create the geometric patterns.
- **Decoration:** Has a repeating pattern of **lines, triangles and chevrons** which are concentrated on the narrow ends on the crescent .

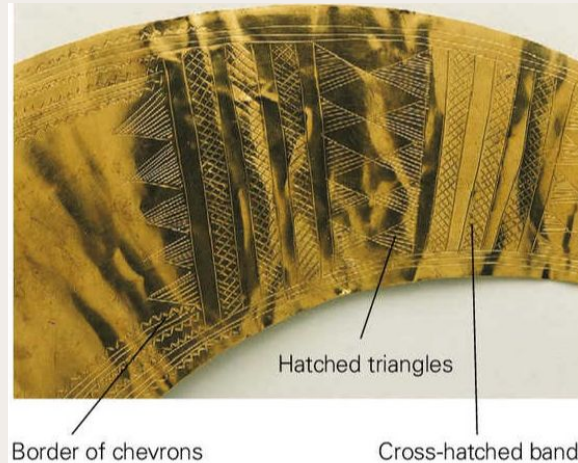


Figure 21.6 A close-up of an area of incised decoration on a lunula.



Figure 21.11 Lunula from Ross, Co. Westmeath.

Artists and artworks - The Bronze Age c. 2000–500 BC

The Early Bronze Age 2500-1500 BC

Decorated Gold Objects - Tedavnet Sun Discs 2000 BC

- **Form:** Made from a thin sheet of gold can cut into 11cm diameter circles.
- **Function:** They were sewn on to a belt or garment - To show status or as a symbolic piece.
- **Technique :** Applied by the **repousse** technique. It created a raised design on a flat surface. Using chisels they were pressed and hammered into the back of the piece. Once completed it was flipped to show the raised design .
- **Decoration :**
Repeating patterns of ridges and dots and chevrons was made on the perimeter and a cruciform in the center.



Figure 21.10 Tedavnet Sun Discs from Co. Monaghan.

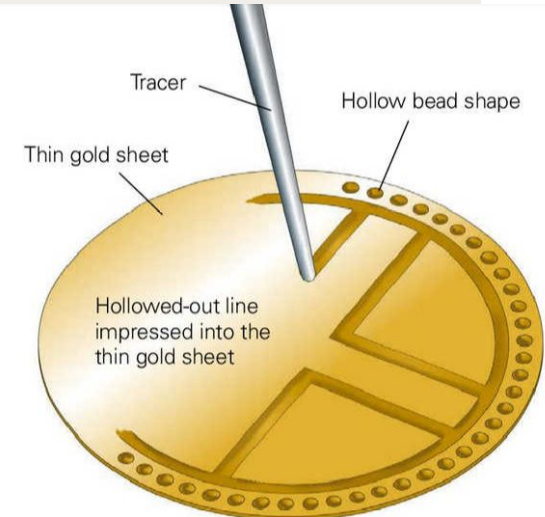


Figure 21.5 The repousse technique.

Artists and artworks - The Bronze Age c. 2000–500 BC

The Middle Bronze Age 1500- 1200 BC

Torcs- Bar and Flanged Torcs

A new form of gold objects appeared around 1400 BC. They were made by twisting flat round or circular rods of gold.

- **Form:** Torcs came in a variety of shapes and forms- square , triangle , circular and cross-shaped.
- **Function:** Worn around the neck , arms, waist and as earrings for sign of status.
- **Technique :** By varying the size of the flanges , length and degree of twist , craftsmen could create a variation of flanged torcs. Catches were made by hammering the ends = hooks or elaborate spirals.



Flanged Torc



Ribbon Torc - Belfast

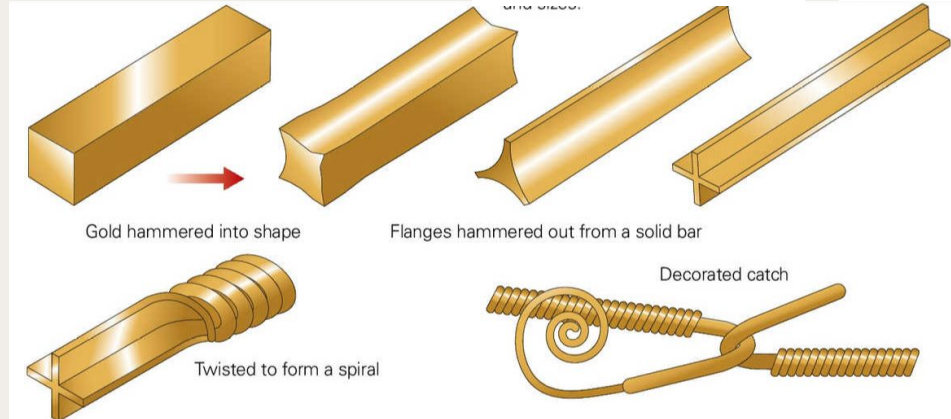


Figure 21.13 Method of making flanged torcs.

Artists and artworks - The Bronze Age c. 2000–500 BC

The Late Bronze Age 1200- 500 BC

The Clones Fibula - Co. Monaghan

A Fibula is made of a gold bow or handle with flat cup-shaped discs at each end. The handle would be first cast and then the cup-shapes would be hammered into the required shape.

- **Form:** It is made using a kilogram of solid gold.
- **Function:** They were used as **dress fasteners** where the **cup-shapes** would be put through the holes of the cloak.
- **Technique:** The handle would be first cast and then the **cup-shapes** would be **hammered** into the required shape. The decoration was **incised** into the gold piece afterwards.
- **Decoration:** The Cup-shaped ends are decorated with **concentric circles** with little **hollows in the centre**. The edge of the handle is incised with **triangles** and bands on lines

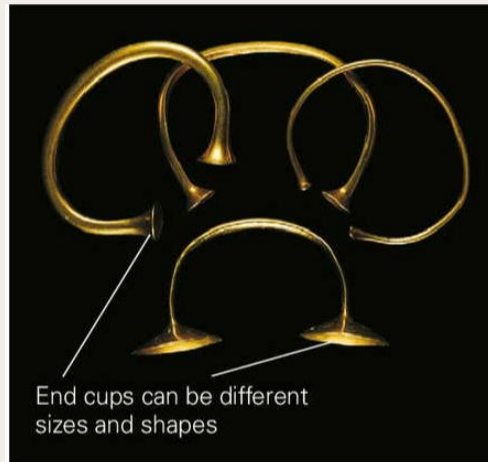


Figure 21.16 A selection of fibulae.

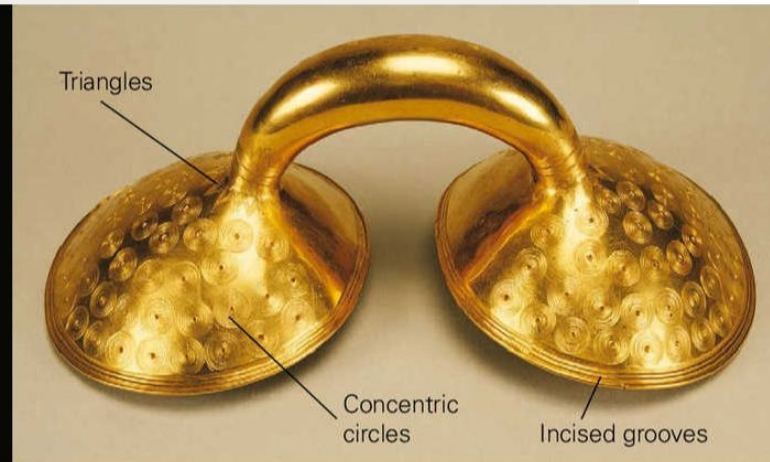


Figure 21.17 The Clones Fibula.

Artists and artworks - The Bronze Age c. 2000–500 BC

The Late Bronze Age 1200- 500 BC

The Gleninsheen Gorget

- **Form:** A U-shape **gold collar with gold discs at each end.**
- **Function:** Worn around the neck to show status.
- **Decoration:** The collar was decorated with a **rope pattern repousse** whereas the **discs has beads** surrounding the perimeter and **concentric circles and cones in the centre**
- **Technique :** The Discs were made with 2 layers - The larger disc **wrapped around the smaller to create a smooth finish.** The outer and inner edge of the collar were finished with a strip of gold to also create a smooth edge. **The collar and disc were connected by stitching gold wire.** The collar and discs were made by flat sheets of gold , **incised and repousse technique used to decorate it .**

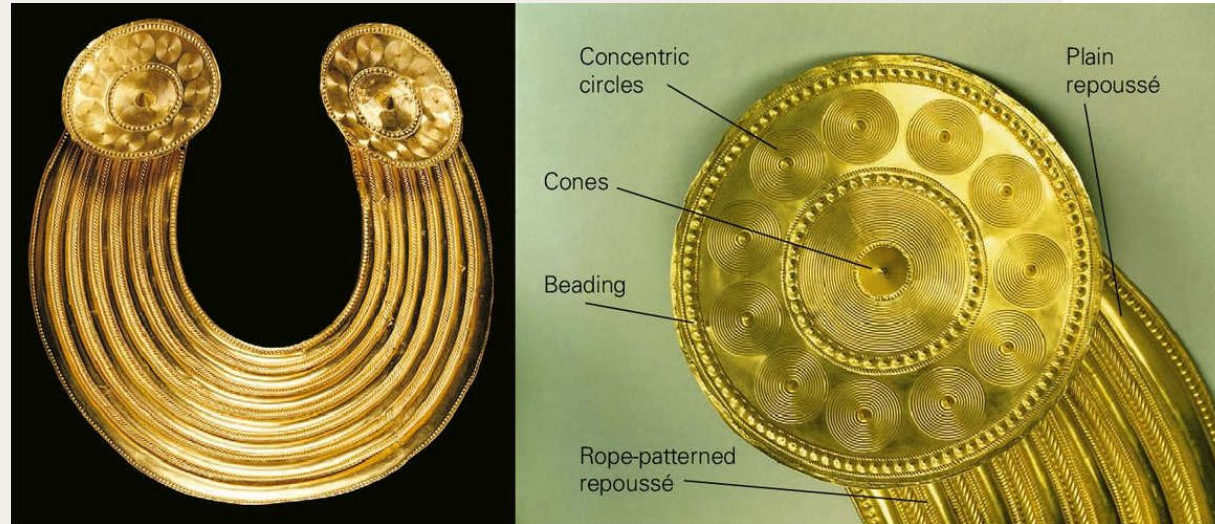


Figure 21.18 The Gleninsheen Gorget with a close-up of an end disc.

Pre-Christian Ireland

C. 4000 BC - AD 500

Poul nabrone portal
dolmen. Burren
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Newgrange c. 3200 BC



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After Pre-Christian Ireland

Insular Art
AD 500-1100

Context / Invention + Innovation - The Iron Age c. 500 BC - AD 400

- When the Roman empire expanded into Northern Europe it led the **Celtic People** into the West and North (Ireland)
 - The Celts were renowned as **warriors, craftsmen and horsemen**, leading them to bringing new Iron technology in 500 BC into Ireland.
 - By 500 BC new style was introduced by the **Celts called La Tene**.
 - La Tene combined influences from classical Greek, Roman art, Etruscans, the Scythians and Oriental art along with the **Celtic Art = combined leafy palmate forms, vines and trumpet shapes**.
 - Trade with Rome brought **new materials and new art elements**; **Enamel** (coloured glass-like material either opaque or transparent. Can be attached by heating it to the metal).
- Triskele** (motif of three curved limbs that spring from the same direction)



Figure 22.2 Scabbard plate design.

Vine scroll ending in a spiral

Decorated trumpet ends

Media and Areas of Practice - The Iron Age c. 500 BC - AD 400

Iron

- Iron technology in Ireland improved and simplified the production of tools and weapons.
- It was **readily in Ireland environment** and **easily worked**.
- It was heated until the impurities were burnt off and hammered into its shape.

Bronze

- Most of the **decoration work was made from bronze** : Tools , utensils , brooches, armbands and rings were all decorated.

Gold

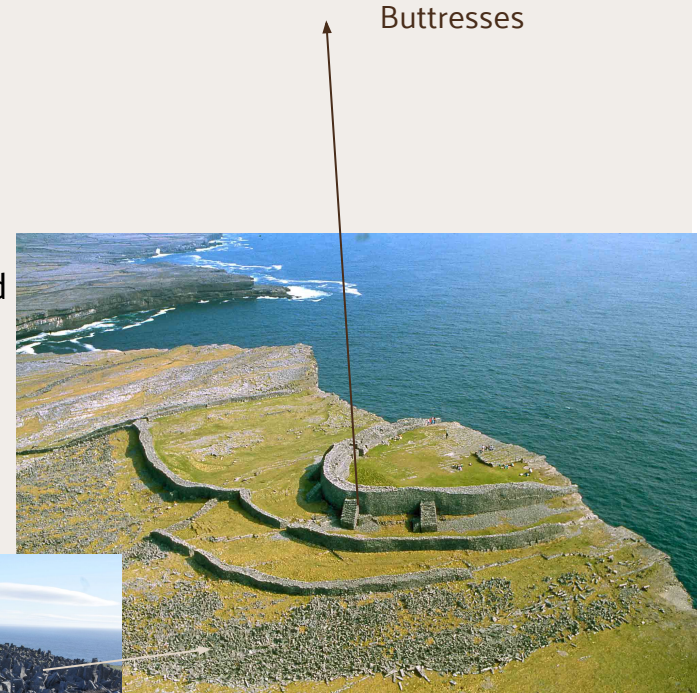
- The finest decorative pieces were made out of gold.
- Hammering and cutting was still used but casting techniques were improved by the Iron Age and **chasing** was used instead of repousse (**Brings a design into relief by pressing back the surrounding area of the design - like a reverse repousse technique**)

Artists and artworks - The Iron Age c. 500 BC - AD 400

Iron Age Structures

Dun Aengus - Inis Mor in the Aran Islands

- **Form: Fort** (a strong building or a place with a wall or fence around it where soldiers can stay and be safe from the enemy) **has 3 walls** . Inner wall is 5m Tall and 6m Thick, with stairs that lead to defensive ramparts (Walkway). A second lower wall encloses the main structure - beside an area called chevaux -de-frise = defense against cavalry and a third wall surrounds the area 200m for the inner wall
- **Function:**
Evidence of domestic buildings -
chieftains residence (Metal work evidence
)/ Centre for ceremonies.
- **Technique** : Built with uncut dry stone
= constructed from stones without an
mortar to bind them together. Inner
wall has a batter - slopes inward =
stable structure

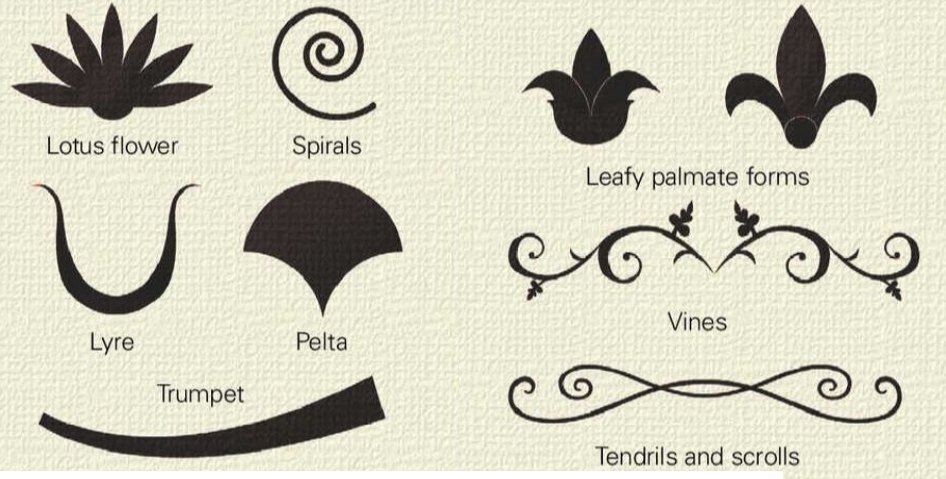


Art Elements and Design Principles - The Iron Age c. 500 BC - AD 400

- **Stone age** art was **drawn free-hand** and **bronze age** used a **straight edge or compass**(both arts were abstract)
- Whereas the Iron Age combined **both free-hand and mechanical elements** in their designs.
- The Iron age also introduced **representational Images** along with the abstract

Abstract = does not represent objects in the real world

Representational =represents objects or events in the real world, usually looking easily recognizable



Celtic Design Motifs - Most of La Tene elaborated on these designs

Artists and artworks - The Iron Age c. 500 BC - AD 400

Stone Carving

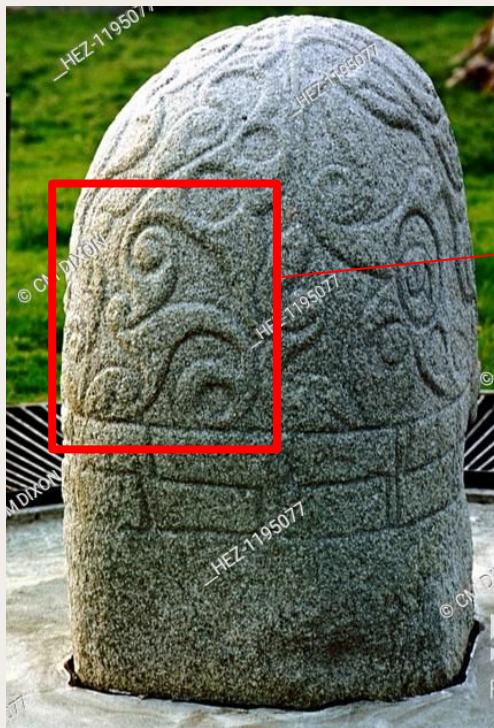
The Turoe Stone Co .Galway 50 BC

- **Form:** **1.68 m tall** and four- ton boulder **pink feldspar Galway granite**.
- **Function:** They might have been **boundary markers or ceremonial objects**.
- **Technique :** Carved with **Iron chisels** to a depth of 3mm - the pattern standing out in **low relief**.
- **Decoration :** **Semi-abstract** leaf and **vine shapes, trumpet** ends and spirals decorate the stone. The design has four segments - two semi-circular take up most of the design. Between these are two smaller triangular segments. **A triskele** appears in one of these triangular segments. On the band below there is a **brick step pattern** which separates it from the plain base.



Figure 22.8 (left)
The Turoe Stone.
In this photograph,
we are looking at
the right-hand part
of the schematic
drawing.

Figure 22.9 (right)
A schematic
drawing of the
Turoe Stone.



Artists and artworks - The Iron Age c. 500 BC - AD 400

Metalwork

The Broighter Hoard Co. Derry

- Found by a ploughman in **Co. Derry**, **The Broighter Hoard** shows the quality of the gold metalwork in the Iron Age.
- The collection consists of a **model boat**, a **bowl made with thin sheet gold**, **two chains**, **two twisted bracelets**, and a **gold collar**.
- The gold boat is a model of a ocean-going craft- indication of how the celtic people traveled around the coast of Europe



Figure 22.13
The Broighter
Hoard.

Artists and artworks - The Iron Age c. 500 BC - AD 400

Metalwork

The Broighter Collar c. 50 BC

- **Form:** Formed by **two tubes of gold sheet with a foliage pattern chased** into the surface. A T-shaped bar is used to lock the two terminals together. Another terminal would hold the other end together.
- **Function:** **High-status** people wore these decorative pieces on special occasions.
- **Technique :** On a flat gold sheet the design was applied using **chasing**. The flat areas were **incised** with compass arcs. The Decorated gold sheets were then heated and rolled into a tube. The tubes were soldered shut and filled with a wax-like substance (**Mastic**) so the tubes could be curved without crushing the tubes. The cast buffer terminals were **riveted onto the ends of the tubes** where a row of beads were raised to hide the rivet heads.
- **Decoration :** The pattern is **symmetrical** based on interconnecting scrolls. It combines a variety of plant-based forms ending in **spiral bosses**. The **incised decoration creates texture** with the smooth raised design. On the buffer terminals there is **raised plant-based designs with gold bead soldered in the centre**.



Figure 22.14 The Broighter Collar is the most elaborate piece of craftwork to have survived from the Iron Age.

Artists and artworks - The Iron Age c. 500 BC - AD 400

Ultimate La Tene

The Loughnashade Trumpet Co. Antrim 100 AD (1st century AD)

In the late Iron Age patterns became more delicate and symmetrical.

- **Form:** Made from two tubes of a **sheet of Bronze joined by a Knob** in the middle. At the end it has a **decorative plate with an open end**.
- **Function:** Used as at ceremonial occasions and for war.
- **Technique :** The edges are rolled together and riveted onto an internal strip of bronze. The end plate has a four-part pattern raised by repousse technique.
- **Decoration :** The **Roman pelta design** forms the basis of the four-part pattern. Combined with **vine strolls and plant forms** forms a **symmetrical** design. It is more **linear and gemortical** than the Broughton Collar design .

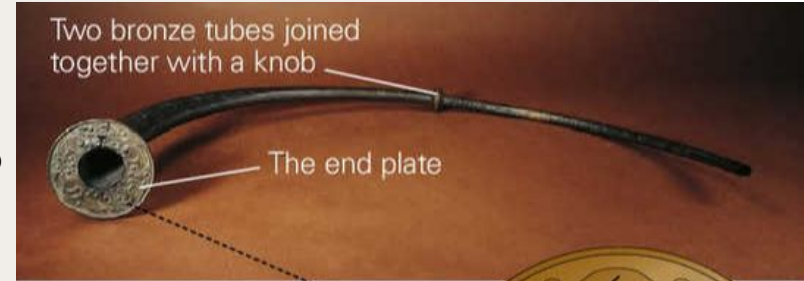


Figure 22.16

The Loughnashade Trumpet.

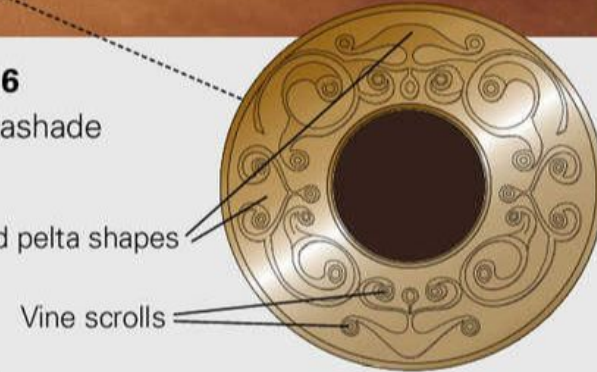


Figure 22.17

The pattern on the end plate of the Loughnashade Trumpet.

Artists and artworks - The Iron Age c. 500 BC - AD 400

Ultimate La Tene The Petrie Crown

- **Form:** Consists of an **openwork band** with a **cone** and **two discs** attached to it.
- **Function:** Although called a crown its function is not certain. It has perforated edges on its band so it might have been sewn to leather or fabric or fixed to wood or metal.

- **Technique :** The raised outlines were made by **cutting back the surrounding metal**. The **concave discs** that are mounted would have been hammered into shape. Each disc has a boss slightly off centre where a **red enamel bead sits in one boss**. The cone shape is made from a sheet of bronze formed into a tapering cylinder .

- **Decoration ;** Decorated with **spirals ending in bird heads** combined with **plant-based and triskele motifs**. The negative and positive space was deliberately placed to create the design. The bird heads were the earliest **zoomorpha** found in Irish art. The circle on one of the **concave disc** might be a **symbol of christian influence or an abstract design**.

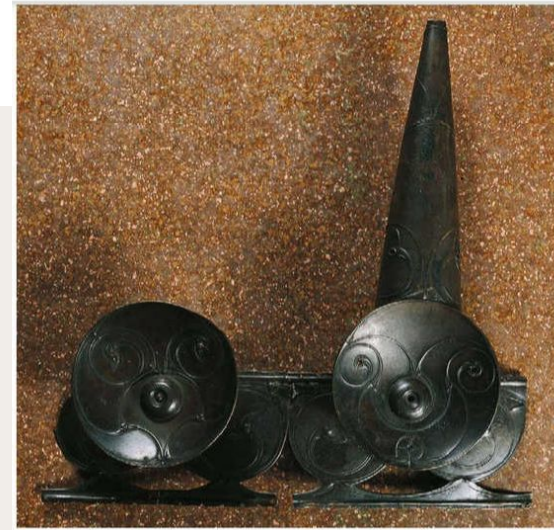
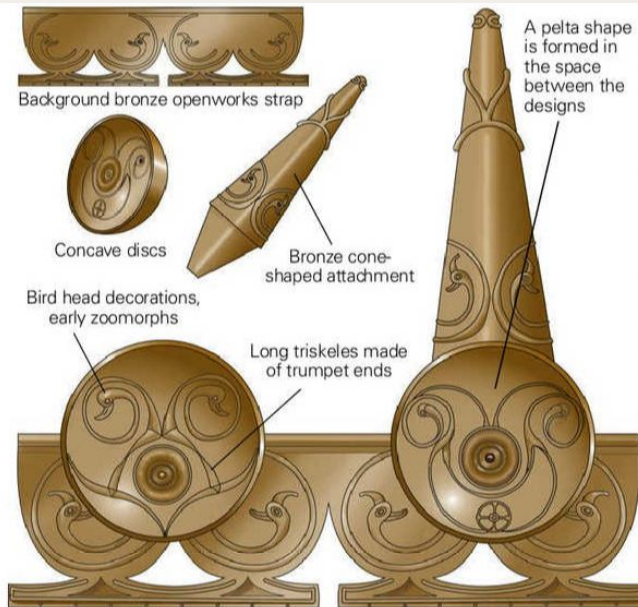


Figure 22.18 The Petrie Crown.



After Pre-Christian Ireland

- The introduction of Christianity in Ireland in the 5th Century brought many changes.
- Monasteries were built and sculptures turned to making cross slabs with La tene decoration.
- Metalworkers and calligraphers incorporated Christian symbols inot designs they have been using for centuries.

