

Pig's Feet



Item: Pig's feet bones Photo: Fiona Beglane

Date: Iron Age 370-110 BC

Find Location: Trim

Current Location:

Description:

Excavations by Mandy Stephens and Finola O'Carroll in the green space to the south of the castle uncovered a number of deposits in peaty soils. One of these deposits contained a number of pig bones, identified as the forelimbs, and these were dated to 370 – 110 BC (O'Carroll and Stephens 2007; Beglane 2009).

The deposit of bones dating to the Iron Age consisted almost entirely of pig forelegs. There was the equivalent of fifty-one pig forelegs, some cattle, horse and sheep bones. The deposition probably took place in the September-November period. These pig's feet could have been votive offerings deposited as part of a ritual feast or part of an autumn slaughter. A parallel with the pig bones at Trim is the midden at Llanmaes in Wales where many of the bones come from the right forequarters of pigs.

Further Information:

Fiona Beglane 'Long pig's feet from Iron Age Trim' in Michael Potterton and Matthew Seaver *Uncovering Medieval Trim – Archaeological Excavations in and around Trim Co. Meath.* (Dublin, 2009)

Bone Piece



Item: Decorated Bone Slip

Date: 2nd Century BC

Find Location: Loughcrew

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

Cairn H of the Loughcrew Cairns was excavated in 1943. A number of bone slips or plaques were discovered. Some were plain and polished while others had incised decoration. The decoration in one case is similar to that on the Brougher Collar. Some of these objects are decorated with fine-line curvilinear compass-drawn designs in an Irish version of the La Tène art style known as the 'Loughcrew-Somerset Style'. These bone slips may be votive offerings.

Further Information:

Raftery, B. 1984. *La Tène in Ireland: Problems of Origin and Chronology*. Marburg.

Raftery, B. 1994. *Pagan Celtic Ireland*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Rahtz, P. *et al.* 1992. *Cadbury-Congresbury 1968-72*. BAR British Series 223

Rossan Bog Body



Item: Bog Body (Photo: National Museum of Ireland)

Date: 700-400 BC

Find Location: Rossan, Kinnegad.

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

The partial remains of a bog body has been uncovered in Rossan bog in Co. Meath. The find was discovered by Bord na Móna workers and subsequently excavated by a team of archaeologists, led by Maeve Sikora of the National Museum of Ireland. Although as yet undated the remains were found in an area that has previously produced bog body remains (Moydrum Man) that were radiocarbon dated to the Early Iron Age (700-400 BC).

Further Information:

<http://irisharchaeology.ie/2014/09/new-bog-body-found-in-rossan-co-meath/>

P.V. Glob, *The Bog People* (London, 1969),

Eamonn P. Kelly, 'New find supports kingship and sovereignty theory' in *Archaeology Ireland* Autumn 2011 pp. 4-5

Eamonn P. Kelly, *Kingship and Sacrifice: Iron Age bog bodies and boundaries* (Bray, 2006)

Clonycavan Man



Item: Clonycavan Man – Bog Body

Date: 392-201 BC

Find Location: Clonycavan, Ballivor.

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

Clonycavan Man, an Iron Age bog body, discovered in Meath in February 2003, displayed signs of a ritual death. Of slight build he was 157 cm (5ft 2 inches) tall. He could have been as tall as 175 cm (5ft 9 inches) as the body may have shrunk in the bog. He was over 25 years of age and his body was naked when found as were most bog body finds. Clonycavan Man had a distinctive hairstyle, at the back of the head the hair was cut to about 2.5 cm long with the rest of hair about 20cm long gathered into a bundle on top of his head. His hair was shaved across the front of his forehead. Clonycavan Man used a type of hair gel, plant or vegetable oil mixed with pine resin, perhaps to give him the impression of height. The pine resin came from trees which grow in the Pyrenees in south western France or Spain.

Further Information:

'Clonycavan Man: A Bog Body from Ballivor by Noel French

<http://irisharchaeology.ie/2011/08/irish-bog-bodies-recent-discoveries/>

P.V. Glob, *The Bog People* (London, 1969),

Eamonn P. Kelly, 'New find supports kingship and sovereignty theory' in *Archaeology Ireland* Autumn 2011 pp. 4-5

Eamonn P. Kelly, *Kingship and Sacrifice: Iron Age bog bodies and boundaries* (Bray, 2006)

Block of Enamel



Item: Block of Enamel

Date: Early Historic Period/Iron Age

Find Location: Between Tara and Kilmessan

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

Enamel was used to decorate metalwork. Enamel is a type of allochromatic glass that consists usually of quartz sand, iron oxide, potassium oxide (potash) and borax (flux). These components form a transparent and colourless fondant after firing at temperatures between 700 and 900 degrees Celsius. It is possible that enamel may have been imported from the Mediterranean region, particularly Italy. This substance is generally red in colour during the early phases of the Iron Age. The find would tend to indicate that there was a bronze working centre at or near Tara. Enameling is a decoration technique in which a glass of certain composition is fused to the surrounding or under laying metal. Metal items, especially bronze objects, were often inset with enamel. This was achieved either by creating a raised bordered area on the metal surface (the *champlevé* technique) or by creating a recessed area (the *cloisonné* method); in both cases, the areas were then filled with coloured enamel.

Further Information:

Valerie Ball and Margaret Stokes, 'On a block of red glass enamel said to have been found on Tara Hill: with observations on the use of red enamel in Ireland' in *R.I.A. Trans.* xxx (1892-6) pp 277-94; E.C.R. Armstrong, 'Note on block of red enamel from Tara' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.* xli (1911), pp 61-2.

Lumps of Enamel



Item: Lumps of Enamel

Date: Early Historic Period/Iron Age

Find Location: Hill of Tara

Current Location: British Museum

Description:

Three glass lumps of red enamel-paste; broken off from larger mass. Length: 41.2 millimetres (max) Weight: 81 grammes (total, all three). Donated by Dr. Valentine Bell. Acquired 1892. Enamel was used to decorate metalwork. Enamel is a type of allochromatic glass that consists usually of quartz sand, iron oxide, potassium oxide (potash) and borax (flux). These components form a transparent and colourless fondant after firing at temperatures between 700 and 900 degrees Celsius. It is possible that enamel may have been imported from the Mediterranean region, particularly Italy. This substance is generally red in colour during the early phases of the Iron Age. The find would tend to indicate that there was a bronze working centre at or near Tara. Enameling is a decoration technique in which a glass of certain composition is fused to the surrounding or under laying metal. Metal items, especially bronze objects, were often inset with enamel. This was achieved either by creating a raised bordered area on the metal surface (the *champlevé* technique) or by creating a recessed area (the *cloisonné* method); in both cases, the areas were then filled with coloured enamel.

Further Information:

Valerie Ball and Margaret Stokes, 'On a block of red glass enamel said to have been found on Tara Hill: with observations on the use of red enamel in Ireland' in *R.I.A. Trans.* xxx (1892-6) pp 277-94; E.C.R. Armstrong, 'Note on block of red enamel from Tara' in *R.S.A.I. Jn.* xli (1911), pp 61-2.

Three Copper-Alloy Toe Rings



Item: Three Copper-Alloy Toe Rings

Date: Iron Age 100BC-100AD

Find Location: Rath, Ashbourne

Current Location:

Description:

During the excavation of the feet three copper-alloy rings were found at the toes of both feet. Two of these rings are almost identical with one found encircling toes on each foot. Both are spiral-rings roughly of the size and shape of modern key rings. The spiral-ring on the right foot, however, was located *in situ*, meaning that it had been found in the same position as it was at the time of the funeral. The ring was still in an upright position and clasped around the tips of at least two toes (the big toe and the one next to it). The third toe-ring, which was decorated with a herring-bone motif, was also found on the right foot, encircling the toe next to the little toe. The presence of the two almost identical spiral-rings could indicate that they were part of some kind of footwear. The position of the spiral-ring on the right foot with the ring on the tips of at least two toes shows that it was not worn as a toe-ring as such, because it would have slid off the toe. One possibility is that the rings were put in this position especially for the funeral. Another explanation may be that the two spiral-rings were attached to sandals.

Further Information:

Holger Schweitzer "Iron Age toe-rings from Rath, County Meath, on the N2 Finglas-Ashbourne Road Scheme." *Recent archaeological discoveries on national road schemes 2004: proceedings of a seminar for the public, Dublin, 2004.*

Cultural Resource Development Services Ltd

Roman Samian Ware



Item: Samian Pottery

Date: Roman 100-400 AD

Find Location: Lagore, Dunshaughlin

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

At Lagore crannog, near Dunshaughlin, various Roman items were uncovered in the dig in the 1930s. Sherds of Samian ware, a fine bright red pottery originating in Gaul, were found at Lagore. This type of pottery was created in Gaul, France, in the middle of the second century. Sherds of this type of pottery were also uncovered at Tara and Knowth. Three small sherds of Samian ware were found during excavations at Lagore Crannog, between 1934 and 1936. The fabric of the pottery is orange-pink in colour and the slip is orange-red. All three are decorated body sherds. Fine horizontal grooves formed by the potter's fingers are visibly on the interior surface of smallest sherd. One of the sherds has traces of wear and has been perforated, possibly for later re-use as a pendant. Samian ware is the name given to red-gloss pottery that was mass-produced from the first century BC to the third century AD. It was first produced in northern Italy but by midway through the first century AD it was nearly all being made in Gaul with some small scale production in Colchester in Roman Britain. Distinguished by its red colour, Samian ware is often elaborately decorated with typical classical scenes from mythology. Bowls, dishes, plates and small cups with decoration in relief were made by throwing the pot within a mould.

Further Information:

Comber, M. (2001) "Trade and Communication Networks in Early Historic Ireland", *The Journal of Irish Archaeology*, 10, Wordwell Ltd.

Hencken, H. (1950) "Lagore Crannog: An Irish Royal Residence of the 7th and 10th Centuries AD", *PRAI* 53C

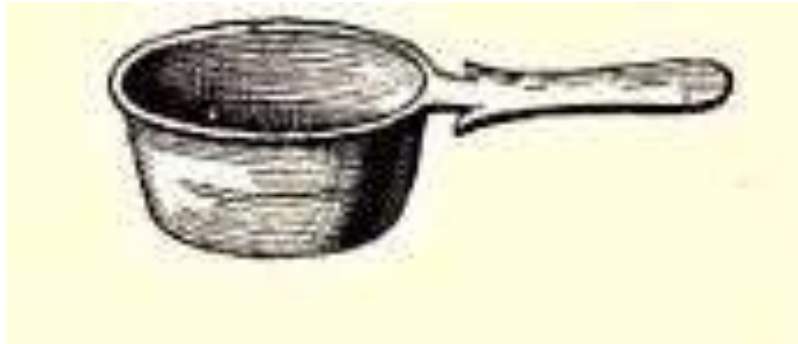
Lynn, C. (1984) "Some Fragments of Exotic Porphyry found in Ireland", *The Journal of Irish Archaeology*, 2, Wordwell Ltd.

Warner, R.B. (1976) "Some observations on the context and interpretation of exotic material in Ireland, from the first century BC to the second century AD", *PRAI* 76C

www.irisharchaeology.ie/2011/11/roman-contacts-with-ireland/

Iron Age - Meath Virtual Museum – Noel French

Ladle – Roman



Item: Ladle

Date: Roman 100-400 AD

Find Location: Bohermeen

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

A bronze ladle with a round bottom and a long winged handle was discovered in 1848 by turf-cutters in the bog of Bohermeen, in close proximity to a large number of pointed stakes and other remains of timber which may have been the remains of a crannog. The ladle is of a kind found widely and commonly throughout the Roman world. The ladle is constructed of extremely thin bronze, measuring in all 28 cm, the internal diameter of its bowl being 13 cm. A bronze pin was also discovered with the ladle. The ladle is one of the few functional Roman items discovered in Ireland and may point to an element of trade. Alternatively the item may have been a votive offering.

Further Information:

W. G. Wood-Martin. *The lake dwellings of Ireland: or, Ancient lacustrine habitations of Erin, commonly called crannogs* (Dublin, 1886)

Seán P Ó Ríordáin, 'Roman material in Ireland' *Proceedings of the R.I.A.* (May 1947) Section C, pp 35-82.

J. D. Bateson 'Roman material from Ireland: a re-consideration' in *Proceedings of the R.I.A.* vol. 73 sec. C (1973) pp. 21-98.

Coins – Roman Newgrange



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Item: Roman Coins

Date: Roman 100-400 AD

Find Location: Newgrange

Current Location: National Museum

Description:

Newgrange was venerated as a shrine by pilgrims of high social status and they deposited votive offerings at the site. Coins from first, third and especially fourth century have been uncovered. The first Roman coins uncovered at Newgrange were discovered about 1699 when the tomb itself came to light. Coins from various emperors were unearthed - Domitian AD 81-96, Postumus AD 260-168, Probus 276- 282, Maximian 286- 305, Constantine I 308-337, Constantine II 337- 340 and later emperors. The wide date range, high value and quantity rule out casual loss. The suggestion is that they were grave goods or votive offerings. The likely depositors are the native Irish rather than Romans.

They depict the Emperors Constantine I and Constantine II and were struck at the Roman mint in Trier, a city now located in modern Germany. The first coin bears the inscription CONSTANTINVS P F AVG and dates from AD 330-337, while the second coin is inscribed CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C and dates from AD 320-330. They both contain small loops for suspension, which suggests that they had been reused as pendants. The coins form part of a very important corpus of Roman material from the site. This collection of Roman artefacts includes at least 25 coins along with a number of rings, brooches and torc fragments. The majority of these objects came from two specific locations; the area in front of the tomb entrance and the ground surrounding the three largest stones of the Great Stone Circle, which surrounds the monument.

Further Information:

<http://irisharchaeology.ie/2013/04/roman-coins-from-newgrange/>

R.A.G. Carson and Claire O’Kelly ‘A catalogue of the Roman coins from Newgrange, co. Meath’ and ‘Notes on the coins and related finds’ in *Proceedings of the R.I.A.* vol. 77 sec. C (1977) pp. 35-56

Vittorio Di Martino *Roman Ireland* (Cork 2003)

Roman Objects



Item: Votive offerings of Roman jewellery and two pieces of inscribed metalwork

Date: 2nd to 4th century AD

Find Location: Newgrange

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

Newgrange was venerated as a shrine by pilgrims of high social status and they deposited votive offerings at the site. Among the items deposited were a finger ring made of copper and tin with Celtic style design; a disc brooch of bronze with gilt central inset of black glass and decorated with running spirals and circles with a gilded face at centre of brooch above and the end of a Torc. In 1842 five gold items were uncovered at Newgrange near the entrance - a gold chain, two bracelets and two finger rings. In 1967 the hook end of a gold torc with an inscription SCORNS.MB was discovered at Newgrange. The brooches are believed to have been made in the south east of England in the Roman period.

Further Information:

<http://irisharchaeology.ie/2013/04/roman-coins-from-newgrange/>

R.A.G. Carson and Claire O’Kelly ‘A catalogue of the Roman coins from Newgrange, co. Meath’ and ‘Notes on the coins and related finds’ in *Proceedings of the R.I.A.* vol. 77 sec. C (1977) pp. 35-56
Vittorio Di Martino *Roman Ireland* (Cork 2003)

Roman Coin - Navan



Item: Roman Coin (not actual coin in photo – similar coin)

Date: Roman 161-175 AD

Find Location: Navan

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

A coin of Younger Faustina 161-175 was discovered at Navan but the site of the find is not located. It was given by William Wakeman to George Petrie who deposited it in the Royal Irish Academy.

Further Information:

<http://www.navanhistory.ie/index.php?page=roman-statu>

J.D. Bateson, 'Roman material from Ireland: a re-consideration' in *Proceedings of the R.I.A.* vol. 73 sec. C, 1973, pp. 21-98.

Statue Roman



Item: Statue

Date: Roman 100-400 AD

Find Location: Navan

Current Location: National Museum of Ireland

Description:

This statue, at approx 8 cm high, and made of copper alloy, is described as having originally been ‘found in the River Boyne near to Navan’. A figurine of a youthful male wearing a knee length tunic with sash, possible boots and a wreath on his head. The left arm is held out in front of his body and the right arm extends above his head but is fractured at the wrist. It is Roman and was believed to be a representation of Hercules, but now thought by the museum to perhaps be a representation of a Lar. Lares were the deities of an area of land or a territory said to bring protection and plenty to the community that lived on that land. They were also associated with the cult of the Emperor and were often placed at shrines found at crossroads and boundaries. Presented to George Petrie by William Wakeman. The figurine may have been deposited in the river as a votive offering. The figure was believed lost but was recently re-discovered in the Museum crypt.

Further Information:

<http://www.museum.ie/The-Collections/Documentation-Discoveries/September/A-Roman-figurine>

<http://www.navanhistory.ie/index.php?page=roman-statue>

Roman Finger Ring



Item: Finger Ring

Date: Fourth Century Romano-British

Find Location: Newgrange

Current Location: British Museum

Description:

Gold finger-ring. The hoop, oval in plan view, is formed of three beaded wires attached to one another. The shoulders are decorated with double spirals of milled/beaded wire and small pellets. The S-patterns all face the same way, rather than being paired as mirror-images. The raised oval bezel is incised around the edge to give a roped effect, and is set with an undecorated, flat-surfaced blue stone, a nicolo (quartz).. The gold is heavily worn. There is a small rectangular piece of sheet gold applied to the interior surface of the hoop under the bezel area. Acquired by British Museum in 1884.

Further Information:

Kent & Painter 1977 no. 232