



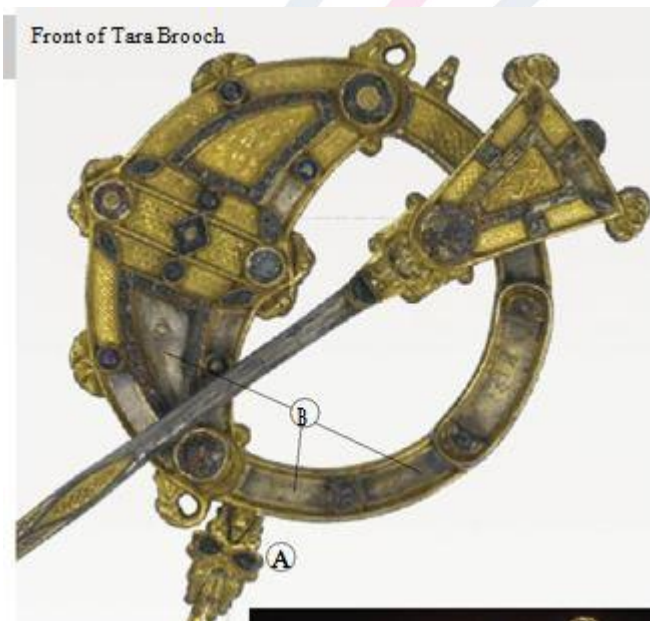
Leaving Cert Art History

Free Notes

**Christian Metalwork
Tara Brooch**

Tara Brooch, 8th century

- Finest of all Irish brooches - Also the smallest
- Referred to as a Penannular Brooch, the Tara brooch is actually a **Pseudo penannular**
 - as there is no gap in the ring for a pin to pass through
- No direct Christian connection - could have been made for any important or wealthy person
- Chain and loops required for fastening
- Found on the seashore at Bettystown, near where a cliff had collapsed
- Named the Tara Brooch by a jeweller who had it in his possession for some time
- Close in style to the Ardagh Chalice, suggesting it may have come from the same workshop
- Astonishing amount of minute, skilled work and detailed ornament, which like The Book of Kells fits into a small space
- Perfect example of 8th century craftsmanship, in that every skill available in metalwork at the time is found on the small surface of this brooch
- Mesh chain suggests the brooch is one of a pair, originally joined together across the back of the shoulders of the wearer



Details / decoration on the Tara Brooch

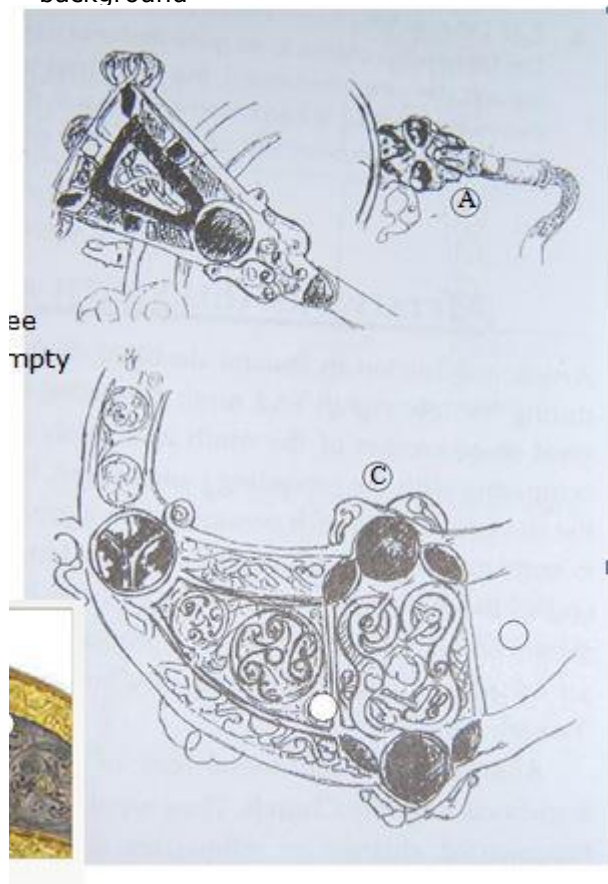
- Fantastical animals appear to be a theme on the Tara Brooch, they appear:
 - in the filigree sections
 - in the castings on the back
 - at several places on the perimeter
 - on the pin and chain connections



Ⓐ Back of Tara Brooch

The Ring

- Crowded with decoration back and front
- A • Decorations depict beasts with pronounced eyes and lips that curls and intertwine, in raised gold thread filigree
- B • A number of panels of decoration at the front are now empty
- C • Glass and amber studs punctuate the surface at key points in the design, back and front
- D • 2 plates on back of brooch have La Tène design, dark against a silver background: These dark outlines where originally made of copper which would have glowed copper red against the silver background





Ultimate La Tène Decoration: Spirals, S-shaped scrolls, triskeles and lentoid shapes from the repertoire of the Iron Age metalworker are all used to decorate artefacts in the early medieval period. Fine engraved decoration also becomes popular.

Filigree: Fine work with gold and silver wire reaches its zenith in the 8th century, and its best expression is seen on the Tara Brooch, Ardagh Chalice, and Derrynaflan Paten.

Animal Art: Animals are depicted in cast and applied decoration.

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