



Leaving Cert Art History

Free Notes

Chi Roo

Art History: Thursday 8th November 2012, Teacher: Christina Bennett

Chi-Rho page from St Matthew's gospel **Christ is born**

- Last and finest page of the Book of Kells
- A Christmas page
- **Chi Rho is the Greek word for Christ**
- Chi and Rho are the first 2 letters of the word Christ in Greek X makes the "ch" sound
P makes the "r" sound
- At the bottom of the page is the Latin word "generatio" which means "the birth" This page reads **Christ is born**

Details outside of XPI

- A**
- Above the X is a head, depicting God the Father, overlooking the scene, overlooking creation
 - To the left of the X is a pair of head to head butterflies - symbols of resurrection
 - Lower down on the left hand side of the "leg" of the X are 3 angels

B - 1 singular

C - a pair of angels just below

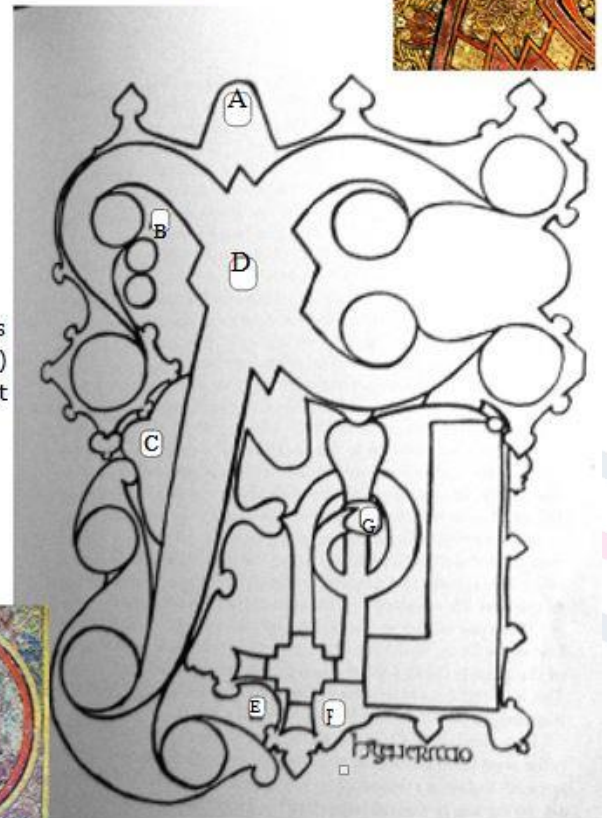
- These angels may be those who appeared to the shepherds???

God and the angels are looking on

God and the angels are looking on

Inside X

- D • In the centre of the X are depicted **4 men** with elaborately intertwining legs
 - The 4 evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - the 4 gospels
- Also included in the centre of the X are **4 animals**
- **12 serpents** (renewal)
- **12 birds** (everlasting life)
- E • Lower down to the right of the leg of the X are depicted
 - 2 Cats facing each other with 4 kittens
 - Some people think *the kittens may in fact be Mice*
 - Thus, the depiction of the mouse licking the cat's ear, the cats holding the mice, represents that these natural enemies (and all of creation) were at peace and harmony on Christmas night
 - The 2 mice (or kittens) in the middle share a round white disc, believed to be communion bread
- F • Lower down, a black otter holds a salmon (symbol of Christ) in its mouth



Inside PI

- G • In the centre of the PI, the "P" letter swirls around and ends with a head at the centre.
 - The head with red hair and facial hair is believed to be Christ
 - This is Christ the baby, even though he has facial hair
 - This depicts his **duality**
 - Although he was the **baby of Mary**, at the same time he was **also God**



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