INSULAR DRESS IN EARLY MEDIEVAL IRELAND

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This paper proposes to examine the dress styles portrayed in figurative art produced in Ireland between the advent of Christianity in the fifth century and the defeat of the Vikings at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. Any study of dress would naturally rely on surviving garments where possible but in their absence, contemporary depictions and literature can bridge the gap in our knowledge. There are a small number of surviving textiles which date to both the Celtic Iron Age and the early Christian Period in Ireland but these are generally too fragmentary to provide useful information on costume. The art dating to the early medieval period was the first extensive figurative art in the country and the clothed representations therefore provide us with our first opportunity for a study of costume in Ireland. There is a large body of early Irish literature relating to the early medieval period but it is generally used as an historical source with reservations as it was written down at a later date and the meaning of words often changed over time. Additionally one has to allow for the poetic licence of later narrators who embellished their heroes with the status symbols of their own time such as silk and satin. The literature also is often described as 'hierarchical' since the sagas and legends only reflect the life of aristocratic society in Ireland.

It is very likely that the arrival of Christianity had little initial impact on dress and that there was considerable continuity with the Celtic tradition. On the continent, classical writers described the Celts in their central European homeland as a people fond of brightly coloured, striped and checked fabrics.1 They are also described as a vain people who delighted in gaudy ostentation.2 The surviving textiles from Hallstatt contexts in Europe include woven twill and plaid fabrics with colours ranging from natural wool colours such as white, beige and brown as well as brightly dyed cloth in red, blue, green and black.3 In Ireland, descriptions of Celtic dress

are found in the heroic sagas and literature which survived in an oral tradition and were written down at a later date. Early Irish sources such as the Táin as well as other myths and sagas frequently describe a style of dress consisting of a léine or tunic and a brat or cloak. In an early Irish text the clothes of a figure are described as ‘a fringed scarlet cloak round him; a brooch inlaid with gold fastening the mantle over his white shoulders, a tunic of kingly satin next to this white skin’.

The léine which is generally translated as a ‘shirt’ or ‘tunic’, was an ankle-length sleeveless garment and is usually described as worn next to the skin and made of white linen. Shorter versions of this garment were worn by people involved in physical work. The léine was secured at the waist by a belt and according to Aislinge Meic Conglinne (a late twelfth-century literary source) it could be hitched up at the waist when necessary to allow freedom of movement. In this source Anier Mac Conglinne drew up his léine as he prepared to go walking. The Triads suggest that there was a limit to the brevity and that there should be ‘three lawful handbreaths; a handbreadth between shoes and trews; a handbreadth between ear and hair, a handbreadth between the fringe of the tunic and the knee’. The brat or cloak worn over the léine could be very large and was sometimes described as wrapped around the body five times. The cloak was a symbol of social status and was often very large and ornately decorated with decorative borders along the edge. It was secured on the breast by a bronze, silver or iron brooch or pin depending on the individual’s social status and wealth. The brat or cloak was also brightly coloured with descriptions of purple, crimson and green cloth dominating the literature. Celtic cloaks were famous and those made in Gaul were exported to the Mediterranean world. Trousers or truibhas (now pronounced ‘trews’) were also worn by certain tribes of the Celts. On the Gundestrup cauldron (c. first century BC) found in Denmark, soldiers are depicted wearing tight fitting trews to the knee. There are also frequent references to truibhas throughout the early Irish

4 Raftery, Pagan Celtic Ireland, 16.
6 J. Gantz, Early Irish myths and sagas (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 204.
7 Dunlevy, Dress, 17.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 25.
11 Dunlevy, Dress, 18.
13 Dunlevy, Dress, 18.
14 Raftery, Pagan Celtic Ireland, 128.
15 E. O’Curry, On the manners and customs of the ancient Irish (Dublin: W.B. Kelly, 1873). i
16 Dunlevy, Dress, 21.
myths and sagas and they seem to have been a distinctive feature of Celtic apparel. This is not altogether surprising as the Celts were renowned horsemen and trousers were more suitable for riding. The wearing of trousers may not have been favoured by the Irish aristocracy however, as they are consistently described as wearing the *brat* and *léine* outfit. The descriptions of individuals wearing trews in the literature seem to have been confined to horsemen or those engaged in outdoor pursuits.

Early medieval figurative art emerged under the patronage of the Church and most of the surviving artwork is religious in content. It manifested itself in several mediums including carved stone crosses and illuminated manuscripts which both contain numerous depictions of clothed figures. Early Christian art in the west, however, is generally derivative in form and manifests itself in copies of models imported from the east Mediterranean world and elsewhere. The figural scenes from much of this material tend as a result to be iconic and the sources of the dress styles portrayed in both insular illuminated manuscripts and carved stone crosses are often eastern in origin and may even be archaic in form.

During the first millennium a similar style of dress including a cloak and long undergarment was worn in both the east and the west but more voluminous or lightweight fabrics such as silk were important in the east. The styles as a result can sometimes be distinguished by the drape of the garments. We also have direct evidence in Ireland from archaeological finds that various types of brooches, leather shoes and belts with buckles were worn throughout the Celtic and early medieval periods. We can occasionally identify these early medieval Irish types of accessories in the visual material. The Irish High Crosses are also very interesting for a costume study because in addition to recognizable biblical scenes they also portray scenes which appear to be of pagan or of local significance. In these scenes figures which are considered to be high status local characters are depicted wearing contemporary styles of clothing, thus providing us with a unique insight into insular costume.

The figurative art found in insular illuminated manuscripts is generally more iconic than the carved stone crosses. Interestingly however, many of the leather shoe types recorded from both Ireland and Iona (western Scotland), can be paralleled in insular manuscript illuminations. There have been two important typological studies of

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17 Gantz, *Early Irish myths*.
21 Dunlevy, *Dress*, 16-17.
shoes found in archaeological contexts by Lucas\textsuperscript{22} and Barber.\textsuperscript{23} Some more recent archaeological finds of leather shoes from Deerpark Farm, Co. Antrim, further add to the body of evidence.\textsuperscript{24} Barber points out that only one type of shoe from Iona has no manuscript analogies.\textsuperscript{25} In the symbol of St Matthew (fo. 21\textsuperscript{v}) in the Book of Durrow, Dublin, Trinity College, MS 57, dated to the late seventh century, the rectangular and armless body of a figure is depicted (Fig. 14). In keeping with the earliest depicted material which evolved from the non-naturalistic tradition of Celtic art, the figure and his clothing are stylistically portrayed. His clothing appears to consist of a tunic perhaps with a front opening, ankle-length trews and shoes of Irish type. The portrait of St John in the Book of Mulling, Dublin, Trinity College, MS 60 (fo. 81\textsuperscript{v}), dated to the second half of the eighth century, also depicts John wearing shoes of recognizable type worn with a tunic and heavy striped cloak. These probably correspond to Lucas's shoe type 1 or 2 with a tongue extending upwards from behind the heel.\textsuperscript{26} There are twelve other figures in the insular manuscripts wearing shoes of recognizable types.\textsuperscript{27}

The carved stone crosses from the early Christian period, particular the early and middle eighth century, display an interesting combination of non-representational art and figural scenes. The latter may be broadly categorized into those which are clearly identifiable as Christian iconography, and a series of enigmatic hunting and war scenes.\textsuperscript{28} These are considered as attempts to assimilate non-Christian heroes and symbols into the Christian tradition. That these scenes had both a secular and Christian significance is not questioned, but their actual meaning is not discernible now. A detail from the Banagher slab, Co. Offaly, has a scene showing a stag hunt and a rider carrying a crozier (Fig. 15). The stag and the horse both have an essential role in Celtic mythology. A figure on the Clonmacnois pillar, Co. Offaly, also from this group of crosses, with crossed legs in the traditional attitude of the deer-god of the Celts, also attests the pagan links of these scenes.\textsuperscript{29} Whatever their precise meaning, it seems likely that they were primarily of indigenous significance and that the clothes worn by the figure in this scene were also indigenous. He wears a short, slightly stylized cloak and, probably, some form of tight leg-wear


\textsuperscript{24} M. Neill, 'A lost last', \textit{Archaeology Ireland}, v, no. 2, issue no. 16 (1991), 14-15.

\textsuperscript{25} Barber, 'Early Christian footwear', 103.

\textsuperscript{26} Lucas, 'Footwear'.

\textsuperscript{27} F. Henry, \textit{Early Christian Irish art} (Dublin: Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, 1954), 31.

\textsuperscript{28} Henry, \textit{Early Christian Irish art}, 47.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
Figure 14
The Book of Durrow, Dublin, Trinity College, MS 57 (Codex Durmachensis), fo. 21V: Symbol of St Matthew
(Reproduced by permission of the Board of Trinity College, Dublin)
Figure 15
Banagher Slab, Co. Offaly: Stag Hunt
(Reproduced by permission of the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin)
Figure 16
The Book of Kells, Dublin, Trinity College, MS A I 6, fo. 255v:
Figure on Horseback
(Reproduced by permission of the Board of Trinity College, Dublin)
Figure 17
The Book of Kells, Dublin, Trinity College, MS A I 6, fo. 89f: Figure on Horseback
(Reproduced by permission of the Board of Trinity College, Dublin)
Figure 18
The Book of Kells, Dublin, Trinity College, MS A I 6, fo. 200f: Seated Warrior
(Reproduced by permission of the Board of Trinity College, Dublin)
Figure 19
Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnois, Co. Offaly: Warrior and Churchman
(Reproduced by permission of Methuen)
Figure 20
Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnois, Co. Offaly: Figures with Plaited Beards
(Reproduced by permission of Methuen)
Figure 21
High Cross of Durrow, Co. Offaly: Holy Family on Foot
(Reproduced by permission of Methuen)
Figure 22
Cross of Muiredach, Monasterboice, Co. Louth: the Arrest of Christ
(Reproduced by permission of Methuen)
Figure 23
Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnois, Co. Offaly: the Resurrection
(Reproduced by permission of Methuen)
Figure 24
The Broken Cross, Kells, Co. Meath: Baptismal Scene
(Reproduced by permission of Methuen)
Figure 25
White Island Statue, Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh: Warrior
(Reproduced by permission of Methuen)
such as trousers, though the exact nature of these can not be seen. These figures on horseback from the earlier crosses are often compared to those found throughout the text in the Book of Kells, Dublin, Trinity College, MS 58. This manuscript is generally dated to the beginning of the ninth century and bridges the early Christian era and the period of the Viking invasions. The Book of Kells, though greatly influenced by eastern models, gives us a wonderful insight into insular dress. The precise origin of this manuscript is uncertain but it is now generally believed to have been completed in Kells, Co. Meath, when the monastery moved there in 807. There is little doubt that this manuscript belongs to the group of insular manuscripts. Many of the figures found in secondary positions which are unrelated to eastern models are particularly interesting in this respect. A series of small figures used within the script for emphasis or embellishment are considered to be the work of one of the four recognizable painters of the Book. He also includes cats, cocks, hens, a greyhound and many other animals. He may have gained inspiration from the Picts of mainland Scotland for this realistic portrayal of animals. Francoise Henry remarks that these little figures give 'a note of everyday life in that haughty universe of the Book of Kells' and also that the scribe 'clothed his borrowings in the garb of familiar reality'. She ventures to say that this artist may have wandered through the monastic farm in search of familiar subjects to draw and it seems likely that his human subjects were also close at hand. On fo. 255' there is a small figure on horseback at the end of a line of script (Fig. 16). This clerical figure has a tonsure and is clothed in a short, curved cloak with a substantial collar. Underneath, he wears knee-length truibhas, which are not immediately apparent, however, as they are not painted in. His feet are shown bare. Another small figure on horseback (fo. 89') is clothed similarly in a short, rectangular cloak with a wide, decorative border along one edge and underneath wearing knee-length, tight-fitting trousers and also some kind of short top appearing only at the neckline (Fig. 17). At the end of a line on fo. 200' a seated warrior is illustrated shown holding a spear and shield and clothed in tight-fitting trousers reaching just below the knee and a fitted top with long sleeves (Fig. 18). These clothed figures are interesting because they illustrate the indigenous clothing of identifiable members of society, namely a cleric out horseriding, another horseman and a warrior.

The first recorded Viking raid on Ireland was in 795 on Rathlin Island, Co. Antrim. It was such incursions which caused the monks

30 F. Henry, The Book of Kells, Reproductions from the manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 213.
31 F. Henry, Irish art during the Viking invasions (800-1020 AD) (London: Methuen, 1967), 76.
32 Edwards, Archaeology, 172.
of Iona to re-establish themselves in Ireland at Kells in 807. The repeated invasion and plundering by the Vikings had a profound effect on the artistic fervour of the monasteries and it seems to have been only in the brief forty-year lull between 875 and 915 that any extensive stone sculpture was produced. The High Cross of Durrow, Co. Offaly, c. 930, marks the end of the series. This period of stone sculpture sees the development of more extensive figural art, and decorative patterns become confined to peripheral positions on the cross. It has been suggested that this may have resulted from an increased desire of the Christians to proclaim their faith in the face of the pagan invaders.

The crosses which are considered to date to this period on the basis of stylistic analysis and a series of inscriptions are divided into two main groups by Françoise Henry. The Monasterboice group of crosses, which includes two crosses from Monasterboice, Co. Louth, the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois, Co. Offaly and the High Cross of Durrow, Co. Offaly, are a wonderful source of information on insular dress. These crosses are considered to be the work of a master carver and the detail on them remains preserved in sharp relief. In addition to iconographical scenes, many relating to the help given by God to the faithful, there are also a number of panels with scenes which are apparently of local importance.

The Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois, Co. Offaly, has two such scenes of local significance. The first may represent the church foundation-post planted by Abbot Colman and King Flann in c. 910 as it seems to depict a warrior and a churchman using their combined effort to insert a post (Fig. 19). The inscription on this cross, 'pray for Flann, son of Maelsechlann', lends support to a secular interpretation. The dress worn by the local figures is particularly interesting as a result. The figure on the left, the cleric, is clothed in an ankle-length tunic with a decorative border at the hem. The detail of the border from the cleric's tunic appears to be a series of squares. He is also wearing boots. Over the tunic is worn a rectangular cloak with a wide decorative border. An object over his shoulders is interpreted as a book satchel by Henry. The warrior on the right side of the panel is wearing a knee-length tunic with a decorative border, belted at the waist and with a sword suspended from it, and has no cloak. As a warrior it was probably imperative that his clothing did not restrict movement so a shorter tunic without a cloak would have been suitable. A scene directly above the cleric-and-warrior panel on the Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnois, may also be related to the foundation of the monastery. It has two figures with plaited beards, armed with long swords, and may represent two neighbouring chieftains (Fig. 20).

34 Ibid., 191.
35 Ibid.
They are offering an unidentified object which they hold at both ends.\footnote{Henry, \textit{Irish art during the Viking invasions}, 191.} Both figures are dressed similarly and wear circular brooches, (possibly penannular) and belts which are characteristic of indigenous dress. Their swords are suspended from these belts. The swords are pinned to their left side while the long cloak is worn pinned on the right leaving that shoulder free for warfare. They are also wearing ankle-length tunics with wide, decorative borders at the hem.

The textile evidence from this period in Ireland, though limited, provides secure evidence for possible forms or techniques of producing decorative borders. A textile from Ballinderry 2 Crannog, Co. Offaly, dated between the late seventh and early ninth centuries, has a finishing border made with fringes of four threads in small tassels.\footnote{L. Bender Jørgensen, \textit{North European textiles until AD 1000} (Aarhus: University Press, 1991), 215.} One of the twill textiles from Lagore Crannog, Co. Meath, from a slightly later context, has a plaited edge,\footnote{L. Start, \textit{Textiles}, in \textit{Lagore crannog: an Irish royal residence of the 7th to the 9th centuries}, H. O'Neill Hencken, \textit{Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy}, liii, section c, 1950-51, 202-24.} while another from this site has its warp ends forming a fringe.\footnote{L. Start, \textit{Lagore}, 210, 213.} There are also two tablet-woven braids from Lagore which are separately woven. One has a fringe and the other has a chevron pattern.\footnote{Ibid., 224.} Tablet woven braids were often used to provide decorative edges to woven textiles. The surviving textiles therefore confirm the popularity of borders and edges which is suggested by the sculptures.

It is difficult to gain an insight into the clothing worn by females during this period. A scene from the High Cross of Durrow, Co. Offaly, probably depicts the Holy family on foot (Fig. 21) and has been compared to a scene on a carolingian ivory in the Louvre Museum, Paris.\footnote{Henry, \textit{Irish art during the Viking invasions}, 179.} It is particularly interesting in that it depicts one of the few informative female representations from these sources. (All of the other female representations are more directly influenced by eastern models). In this scene Mary is depicted in profile carrying the Christ-child on her back and Joseph following behind. She is wearing a calf-length tunic with a decorative border and a cloak over this. Her head is covered with either a hood from the cloak or possibly a veil with a decorative edging. The child is placed inside the cloak on her back which is then secured underneath with a wide sash. It is not clear whether the cloak had a pouch, perhaps for carrying the child, or is merely wrapped around the two figures. The evidence from literature may indicate that Irish women covered their heads from at least the early ninth century. The ancient Irish laws mention ‘a veil of one colour, a diadem of gold and a wire of silver’
as valuable contents of a queen’s work bag. Another interesting reference from the *Irish Penitentials* refers to the correct behaviour of a cleric and his wife. If the wife of a cleric ‘goes about with her head unveiled, they shall both likewise be held in contempt by the laity and be removed from the Church’. Both silk and wool head-coverings were among textile finds from the Hiberno-Norse excavations in Dublin and may reflect a continuous tradition. Women probably wore a similar outfit to men consisting of the *brat* and *léine* with these head-dresses. There are apparently no references to the wearing of trousers by women.

In the depiction of the arrest of Christ on the Cross of Muiredach at Monasterboice, Co. Louth, the soldiers are evidently depicted as coarse characters. Christ is portrayed in typically Irish costume (Fig. 22): an ankle-length tunic with a decorative border over which he wears a cloak, stylistically portrayed, secured on the right shoulder by a penannular brooch. The soldiers either side of him are dressed unusually, both wearing short, striped trousers. Over these the figure on the right wears a fitted, vertically-striped top with long, fitted sleeves and a neckline of rectangular shape. He appears to be wearing a lozenge-shaped brooch on his left breast. Interestingly both of these soldiers are carrying long, Viking swords and it is probable that the figures are meant to represent Vikings cast by the stone sculptor as the soldiers arresting Christ.

A scene from the Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnois, depicting the resurrection, is one of the many scenes from this group of crosses portraying soldiers with conical hats or helmets (Fig. 23). They are unlike Roman helmets (which have crests and flaps) and are considered to be of Viking type. This headgear is only recorded on the later Irish High Crosses dating after the Viking incursions and have parallels to a helmet worn on a small carved figure from Sigtuna, Sweden. A depiction of a Viking on a tenth-century cross at Middleton in Yorkshire has a similar helmet. Once again, it seems that familiar aspects of material culture were incorporated into the figurative art of the period.

We know from linguistic sources that some Old Norse loan words were introduced to Irish before 900. The word *skyrta* which became *scuird* meaning ‘shirt’, ‘tunic’, or ‘cloak’ and *brok* which became *bróg* meaning ‘hose’, ‘trousers’ and (later) ‘shoes’ may

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suggest the introduction of the short tunic and trousers outfit favoured by the Vikings elsewhere. The word *cnaípe* meaning ‘button’, also a Norse derivative, suggests other changes in clothing were taking place. It seems likely that the Vikings, who represented the first major incursion of people since the Celts, must have had an impact on indigenous dress. They are generally accredited with the introduction of imported silk to Ireland through their increased trading connections with Byzantium in the east. It is probable that the tunic evolved into a shorter, more fitted top or jacket called an *ionar* at this stage. However the exact nature of the Vikings’ influence on dress is no longer clear. In the baptismal scene on the Broken Cross from Kells, we have further evidence for insular dress (Fig. 24). This scene does have some Irish features including the representation of the Jordan river by several ribbons placed horizontally. The two figures on the left of Christ are probably wearing Irish ring brooches. These are placed once again on the right shoulder, pinning their cloaks. Their tunics are slightly shorter than usual and they have ornamental borders at the hem.

A group of small stone statues carved in high relief and varying from twenty to forty inches in height were found on White Island in Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh. Others had been re-used in later Romanesque buildings. It has been suggested that they were used as caryatids but this is unconvincing as they are all of different sizes. Their iconography is considered enigmatic. The figure on one of the White Island statues is likely to be a warrior as he holds a sword and shield (Fig. 25). For this reason he has been compared to the companions of the ‘Lord of the Hosts’ on the Tall Cross at Monasterboice. He is wearing a large penannular brooch clearly visible on his left shoulder. This brooch is likely to be non-functional as it is pinned to a tunic only; it may be worn to display his status.

Interestingly, all of the other brooched figures in this series have their brooches pinning cloaks on the right or the left shoulder. The ancient Irish laws make a distinction between the sexes in the wearing of the brooch, with the man’s brooch worn high on the shoulder and the woman’s on the breast, and there is little to contradict this in the depicted sources. The law relating to the wearing of the brooch also deals with injuries caused by protruding brooch pins: ‘the men are exempt from liability, if they have the brooch on their “due”, i.e. on their shoulder; or the women are exempt if they have the brooch on their “dae”, i.e. on their bosom, but so as it is not much beyond it; and if it be, wickedness is the rule respecting it’.


49 Dunlevy, *Dress*, 22.

50 Ibid., 21.


Church vestments, particular to different orders of the church, emerged gradually throughout the first millennium but it was not until the later medieval period that they were firmly established. The everyday clothing of the Romans then became immortalized in the vestments of the church. It seems that, though the Irish may have been familiar with ecclesiastical garments, they continued to wear local dress at least until the late twelfth century. Eddius Stephanus has an account of the visit of an Anglo-Saxon cleric of Celtic persuasion, named Wilfrid, to Rome in 706 during which the Pope rebuked him because his faithful clergy continued to wear trousers. Giraldis Cambrensis' illustrations from the twelfth century indicate that ecclesiastics probably continued to wear established conservative styles of clothing to command local respect in the twelfth century. This is supported by the depicted evidence. The cleric on the Banagher slab and the cleric on horseback from the Book of Kells are informally dressed for horse-riding (Figs 15, 16). The cleric in the foundation scene on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois, is dressed more traditionally in a rectangular cloak and long tunic (Fig. 19).

Early Irish society is described as hierarchical and non-egalitarian. Ancient Irish laws regulating dress styles according to the wearer's designated rank reflect this. The warrior class are defined in early literature as a land owning aristocracy who owed tribute to their local king. They would have been wealthy in terms of clothing and armour. They are often displayed accompanied by a show of arms such as a sword and shield and their clothing reflects their status. They tend to be wearing either a long tunic as in the White Island statue or a pinned cloak and tunic as on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois (Figs 25, 19).

There was considerable variation in the form of trousers throughout this period. We know from literary sources that they were worn by the Celts but it seems that they were not favoured by the Irish aristocracy and may have been confined to soldiers and those engaged in outdoor activities. If the figures in the Book of Kells can be considered as reflecting indigenous dress, both short and long tight-fitting trousers were prevalent at the beginning of the ninth century (Fig. 18). On the Cross of Muiredach at Monasterboice, Co. Louth, there is a short bulbous version of *truibhas* (Fig. 22). It seems likely that various types were worn throughout the first millennium. They were later described by Giraldis Cambrensis on his visit to Ireland in the twelfth century: 'they also wear trousers

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54 Dunlevy, *Dress*, 24-5.
that are at the same time boots, or boots that are at the same time trousers and these are for the most part dyed.\textsuperscript{56} It is interesting that this description is reminiscent of the trousers recovered from the Thorsberg Mose, Denmark which have woven foot-pieces attached. These are considered to date to the pre-Roman Celtic period\textsuperscript{57} which may indicate that there was considerable continuity in the Celtic style of dress throughout the first millennium.

Early medieval religious art is greatly influenced by iconography derived from eastern models but it can be used as an important source of information on insular dress. The basic elements of dress including the tunic, cloak and trousers had a long history of use from the Celtic period throughout the early medieval period. It is apparent from the illustrations that the various ranks of Irish society, including aristocrats, clerics, warriors and chieftains, and those engaged in outdoor activities, seem all to have had diagnostic features of dress. The literature of the period supports and enhances the pictorial evidence and in the absence of surviving costumes both of these sources can give us a unique insight into insular dress styles in the early medieval period.

\textsuperscript{57} M. Hald, \textit{Ancient Danish textiles from bogs and burials}, Archaeological Historical Series, xxi (Denmark: National Museum, 1980), 329.