



# In a Knotshell

*Deciphering the Art of Interlace  
in Medieval Media (and Beyond)*

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## The Art of Interlace and Knotwork

### Selections for Reading and Browsing

[Note: Items marked with \* require some math for parts or all of that reference.]

#### The Genres (A Knotty Problem)

<http://www.wikipedia.org/> Various pages offer links and information; see for example:

- (English): 'Interlace (Art)', 'Celtic Art', 'Celtic Art', 'Croatian Interlace', 'Islamic Interlace Patterns', 'Knot',  
\* 'Knots and Graphs', 'Knots in Traditional Art', 'Knots in Art and Decoration', 'Strapwork',
- (German): 'Flechtband', 'Knotenmuster', 'Germanischer Tierstil', etc.
- (French): 'Entrelacs', \* 'Entrelacs et graphes', etc.

\* Peter Suber, 'Knots on the Web' (1996–2004): [www.earham.edu/~peters/knotlink.htm](http://www.earham.edu/~peters/knotlink.htm)

#### Knots (the Making and Uses Thereof) and Knot Theory

Ashley, Clifford W., *The Ashley Book of Knots* (New York: Doubleday, 1944 etc).

Now a standard reference work, citing its knots classified by number (as in ABoK # 1–3854)

Budworth, Geoffrey, *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Knots & Ropework* (London: Hermes House, 1999)

Graumont, Raoul M., and John J. Hensel, *Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Rope Work* (Cambridge, Maryland: Cornell Maritime Press, 4th rev and enlarged ed., 1952)

International Guild of Knot Tyers (IGKT): [www.igktpab.org](http://www.igktpab.org)

\* 'The Knot Atlas': [katlas.math.toronto.edu](http://katlas.math.toronto.edu)

\* 'Knotblog: All about Knots. The Blog about Knots, Knot Tying, Knot Safety, Knot Research, and Knot Theory':  
[allaboutknots.blogspot.com](http://allaboutknots.blogspot.com)

Macfarlan, Allan and Paulette, *Knotcraft: The Practical and Entertaining Art of Tying Knots* (New York: Dover Publications, 1983)

Owen, Peter, *The Book of Decorative Knots* (Guildford, Connecticut: The Lyons Press, 1994)

\* Rolfsen, Dale, *Knots and Links* (American Mathematical Society, 1976)

\* Turner, J.C. and P. van de Griend, *History and Science of Knots*. Knots & Everything Series on Knots and Everything, 11 (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 1996)

Verrill, A. Hyatt, *Knots, Splices and Rope Work: A Practical Treatise* (2nd rev. ed., 1917) via Project Gutenberg at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

Warner, Charles, *A Fresh Approach to Knotting and Ropework: Knots Arranged According to their Structure* (Charles Warner, 1992 etc.)

#### Forms of Ornament, Including Interlace and Knotwork

Gombrich, Ernst, *The Sense of Order. A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1979)

Jones, Owen, *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day and Son, 1856), online [www.illuminated-books.com](http://www.illuminated-books.com)

Trilling, James: *The Language of Ornament*. World of Art (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001)

#### Medieval Interlace Ornament

Including: Origins, Development, Transmission, and Mythology

Adcock, Gwenda A., 'A Study of the Types of Interlace in Northumbrian Sculpture' (M.Phil. dissertation: University of Durham, 1974), issued in revised version in Cramp (1984 etc)

Allen, J. Romilly, *Celtic Art in Pagan and Christian Times*. The Antiquary's Books (London: Methuen, 1904; reprinted London: Bracken Books, 1994)

— and Joseph Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland. A Classified, Illustrated, Descriptive List of the Monuments, with an Analysis of their Symbolism and Ornamentation* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2 vols., 1903, reprinted in reduced format with an 'Introduction' by Isabel Henderson, Pinkfoot Press, 1993)

Budny, Mildred, 'Deciphering the Art of Interlace', in *From Ireland Coming: Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period in its European Context*, edited by Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 183–210.

Cramp, Rosemary, *Grammar of Anglo-Saxon Ornament*, issued as the 'General Introduction' to Volume 1 (1984) of the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* ([www.ascorpus.ac.uk](http://www.ascorpus.ac.uk)), issued separately (1991) and now via [www.dur.ac.uk/corpus/grammar](http://www.dur.ac.uk/corpus/grammar) — 'Interlace' section derived from Adcock (1974)

Crawford, H.S., *Handbook of Carved Ornament from the Irish Monuments of the Christian Period* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1926; reprinted Marino Books, 1999)

Hubert, Peter, 'The Origins of Interlace in Romanesque Sculpture' (06.06.2011) via [www.green-man-of-cercles/articles/origins\\_of\\_interlace\\_sculpture.pdf](http://www.green-man-of-cercles/articles/origins_of_interlace_sculpture.pdf)

Gabrielsson, R., *Kompositionsformer I Senkeltisk Orneringsstil: Sedda mot bakgrunden av den allmäneuropeiska konstutvecklingen*. Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Amademiens Handlingar, 58:2 (Stockholm, 1945)

Guilman, Jacques, 'Interlace Decoration and the Influence of the North on Mozarabic Decoration', in *The Art Bulletin*, 62 (1960), 211–218

— 'The Composition of the First Cross Page of the Lindisfarne Gospels: "Square Schematism" and the Hiberno-Saxon Aesthetic', in *The Art Bulletin*, 67:4 (December, 1985), 535–547

— 'The Geometry of the Cross-Carpet Pages in the Lindisfarne Gospels', in *Speculum*, 62:1 (1987), 21–52

Haseloff, Günther, 'Insular Animal Styles with Special Reference to Irish Art in the Early Medieval Period', in Ryan (1987), 44–55

Jones, Owen, *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1868), via [digitalgallery.nypl.org](http://digitalgallery.nypl.org) and [www.illuminated-books.com](http://www.illuminated-books.com)

Kitzinger, Ernst, 'The Threshold of the Holy Shrine: Observations on Floor Mosaics at Antioch and Bethlehem', in *Kyriakon. Festschrift J. Quasten*, ed. P. Granfield and H. Jungmann (Münster: Aschendorff, 2 vols., 1970), II, 639–647

— 'Interlace and Icons: Form and Function in Early Insular Art', in *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland*, ed. R.M. Spearman and J. Higgitt (Edinburgh, 1993), 3–13

Lethaby, William R., 'The Origin of Knotted Ornamentation', in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 10:46 (January, 1907), 256

O'Meahdra, Uainnin, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque Art: Motif-Pieces from Ireland: An Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue of the So-Called Artists' "Trial-Pieces" from c. Fifth–Twelfth Cents. A.D. Found in Ireland*. Theses and Papers in North-European Archaeology, 7 and 17 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1979 + 1987)

Nordenfalk, Carl, 'Corbie and Cassiodorus: A Pattern Page Bearing on the Early History of Bookbinding', in *Pantheon: International Annual Art Journal*, 32 (1974), 225–231

Nylén, Erik, and Jan Peder Lamm, *Bildsteine auf Gotland* (Neumünster: Wacholtz, 2nd rev. ed., 1991)

- Roth, Uta, *Studien zur Ornamentik frühchristlicher Handschriften des insularen Bereiches : von den Anfängen bis zum Book of Durrow* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp Zabern, 1979)
- “Early Insular Manuscripts: Ornament and Archaeology, with Special Reference to the Dating of the Book of Durrow,” in Ryan (1987), 23-29
- Ryan, Michael, ed., *Ireland and Insular Art A.D. 500-1200* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1987)
- Stevick, Robert D., *The Earliest Irish and English Bookarts: Visual and Poetic Forms before A.D. 1000* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994)
- Thiel, Erich Joseph, ‘Studien und Thesen zur Initial-Ornamentik des früheren Mittelalters’ and ‘Neue Studien zur ornamentalen Buchmalerei des früheren Mittelalters’, in *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, 5 (1963), cols. 1249-1330, and 11 (1970), cols. 1058-1128
- Werckmeister, Otto, *Irish-northumbrische Buchmalerei des 8. Jahrhunderts und monastische Spiritualität* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967)
- ‘Das Buch of Kells in *Finnigans Wake*’, *Neue Rundschau*, 70 (1966), 44-63

## Design and Construction Methods

### Including Manual, Mechanical and Digital Methods

with patterns by compass, straight edge, networks of dots, grids, templates, purchase, license, etc.

- Bain, George, *Celtic Art: The Methods of Construction* (Glasgow, 1951; reprinted New York: Dover Publications, 1973)
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- Beckett, Katherine Scarfe, ‘Calligraphy Skills: Celtic Knot Designs’: [www.calligraphy-skills.com/celtic-knot-designs.htm](http://www.calligraphy-skills.com/celtic-knot-designs.htm)
- ‘Celtic Interlace Designs. Interlaced Patterns of Knots, Spirals, Zoomorphic Images: Art of Ancient Celts’: [www.visual-arts-cork.com/cultural-history-of-ireland/celtic-interlace-designs.htm](http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/cultural-history-of-ireland/celtic-interlace-designs.htm)
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- Fish, Pat, ‘Celtic Tattooing’ etc, at LuckyFish and LuckyFish Art: [www.luckyfish.com](http://www.luckyfish.com) and [www.luckyfishart.com](http://www.luckyfishart.com)
- ‘Hypknotix: World’s Most Exciting Website for Celtic Knots – Software, Artwork and Resources’: [www.hypknotix.com](http://www.hypknotix.com)
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- \* Sharein, Robert G., ‘The KnotPlot Site’ (1998–2011): [www.knotplot.com](http://www.knotplot.com)
- Sloss, Andy, *How to Draw Celtic Knotwork: A Practical Manual* (London: Caxton Publishing, rev. ed., 2001) and Sloss Designs: [www.51055.com](http://www.51055.com)
- Sturrock, Sheila, *Celtic Knotwork Designs* (Lewes, East Suffolk: Guild of Master Craftsmen Publications, 1997)
- van Stone, Mark, *Celtic Knots: Techniques and Aesthetics* (Arvada, Colorado: Alphabet Studio, 1992)
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