

Introduction to Celtic Art (HPCS4009)

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Assignment 1

Spring 2026

- Write an Object Biography of an artefact that you consider to be an example of Celtic Art. You are free to choose any kind of object, ranging from the Iron Age, Roman or medieval periods.

The piece of writing should be no longer than 2500 words.

An object biography considers the form and meaning of an object as we now understand it in the context of its reception and the changes in its meaning and importance over time.

The assignment should:

- describe the object and highlight the ways in which it can be characterised as Celtic, whether stylistically, culturally, or both
- demonstrate an awareness of how the object and its ornament relate to other examples of Celtic art
- detail the discovery/collection/acquisition of the object
- look at the way in which the object has been described, interpreted, illustrated and characterised by antiquarians, archaeologists and curators
- consider the ways in which it has been displayed and reproduced
- consider any ways in which the object as a whole or its component design or imagery has been creatively adopted in heritage interpretation or by artists and designers.

For the concept of an object biography within archaeology, see:

Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, 'The Cultural Biography of Objects', *World Archaeology*, vol. 31, no. 2, Oct 1999, 169–78.

<http://www.jstor.com/stable/125055>

A short guide can also be found here, with more further reading:

Christina J. Hodge, *A Guide to Object Biography*, 2017

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q7UDHLJ-0tR4MJq-uc1iZcaxaeHI2RDI/view>

Due date: 10 April 2026