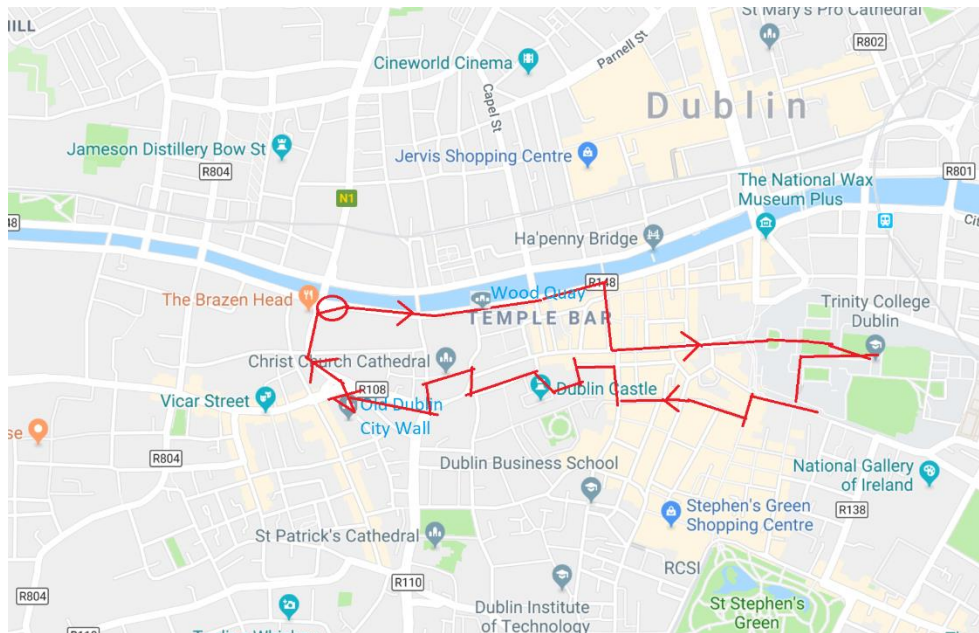


Making and Meaning in Irish Art I – BCHA1

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Option 1) Create an illustrated walking tour of medieval Dublin.

Destinations: Wood Quay, Trinity College Dublin (Book of Durrow, Book of Kells), Dublin castle, Christ Church Cathedral, City Walls



Red lines:
direction of
walking

Meeting Point: The Brazen head



The Medieval Age took place from the 5th to the 15th century. We start our walking tour at the iconic Brazen Head. The Brazen Head is Ireland and Dublin's own oldest pub, dating

back to 1198. The name Dublin has a dual origin. It came from both the Viking settlement called Dyflin. It also originates from the Gaelic dubh linn or “black pool”. This is in reference to where the Poddle stream meets the River Liffey to develop a deep pool at the site of nowadays Dublin Castle.

You're currently standing at the site of bridge gate. This was a key point of defence upon the walled perimeter. This marks the end of the ancient city boundaries.

Wood Quay:



As we walk east along the Liffey quays, the original site of the Dublin city walls, we come across a Viking longboat statue. This marks the location of the historic Wood Quay. Wood Quay was the first thing people saw coming into Viking Dublin. This site was extremely important during Viking days as an area where ships moored to offload goods.

Viking longboat statue.

The preservation of the archaeology at this site was shattering; it offers us precise insights into the Viking and Norman era. A large number of artefacts were uncovered here that informed us about what our ancestors ate, the attire that they donned, the manner in which they worked, lived and died in Dublin over a thousand years ago. Many of these artefacts are now on display at the National Museum of Ireland, on Kildare Street.

A few metres further west is the site of Isolde's tower, a 13th century watchtower. This had a wall 4 metres thick and was 3 storeys high. [3]

Streets of Temple bar:



Turning south from the Liffey we walk through the region of Temple Bar. Temple Bar wasn't always the focal point of touristy pubs in Dublin city. This was originally a residential suburb located outside the city walls. The area you are currently walking through is a historical site of the river Poddle, therefore it didn't exist in the 15th century until the river culverted, it is flowing your feet as you are reading this.

Library of Trinity College Dublin: (Book of Kells & Book of Durrow):



The trinity library is host to a wide selection of important historical books. The library currently displays the famous book of Kells and the book of Durrow. The main chamber of the old library is the Long Room. It is nearly 65 metres in length, it is filled with 200,000 of the library's oldest books and is one of the most impressive libraries in the world.[1]

Book of Kells: The book of Kells was originally created by the Colomaban monks circa 800 AD. It is an illuminated manuscript gospel book meaning it contains all four gospels from the Christian New Testament along with multiple texts and tables. The book itself gets its name from the Abbey of Kells. This former monastery hosted the book of Kells for most of the middle ages. It is a masterclass display of calligraphy and it represents the pinnacle of Insular illumination.

This golden book is widely regarded as Ireland's premier national treasure.

Book of Durrow:

The book of Durrow was produced in scriptorium in the mid 7th century. It predates the book of Kells by a whole century. It is, in fact, the old illuminated manuscript gospel book. It was bequeathed to Trinity College Dublin in 17th century as is kept in the old library you see before you.

Dublin Castle:



Dublin castle was first founded by Meiler Fitzhenry in circa 1204, it is some of the oldest surviving architecture in Dublin city. It is one of the most important buildings in both Dublin's and the whole of Ireland's history. In the medieval ages, this was a bastion. During this time, it served as the residence of the British monarch's representative, the so-called viceroy of Ireland. The castle was a Norman courtyard with the centre plaza surrounded by high walls with a circular tower at every corner.

The wardrobe tower was built during the reign of the British King Henry II (1207-1272) and its walls are up to 4.8metres thick. It is currently closed off to the public.

The castle is situated in the very south-east of medieval Dublin and the city wall was directly along the south and east side of the fortress. The Poddle river was diverted by the castle causing a defensive moat perimeter of the stone castle. Nowadays, the castle is a major tourist attraction and conferencing destination. The building is also used for State dinners and the inauguration ceremony of the president of Ireland. [2]

If you wish to see it with your own eyes, guided tours take 70 minutes and are €10.00 per adult or €24.00 for a family of four.

Christ Church Cathedral:



You should now see Christ Church Cathedral (founded circa 1030). It is the seat of both the Catholic and Church of Ireland archbishops of Dublin. It is located in the very heart of medieval Dublin. The Cathedral was once a major pilgrimage site, and would have been housing an important collection of relics ranging from a holy speaking cross to a piece from the crib of Jesus.

This cathedral contains an extremely large crypt of 63 metres long which was built in 1172. This area contains many fine statues, memorials, priceless silverware and Ireland's first copy of Magna Carta. [4] The tomb of Strongbow also resides here.

A choir school was founded here in 1493 and has the reputation as one of Ireland's finest choirs.

The church as it is today being mainly Victorian due to many renovations in the 1870s.

On the outside, the most interesting feature is the Romanesque doorway on the gable of the southern transept.

If you wish to visit the cathedral along with the crypt, ticket prices are a modest €6.50 for adults and a family of 4 would cost €17.00 altogether. [5]

Old Dublin City Wall:



Before you, you will see the remains of the original city walls of Dublin.

Around 1100 AD the Viking fences were replaced by strong, stone walls which was then further improved later on by the Norman invaders.

As you can see the wall was extremely thick. This was to protect Dublin from the predatory raids of the local Irish clans.

It's commonly believed that the complete foundations from the entire perimeter of the city walls still exist underground. [3]

This finishes our middle ages tour and I hope that this guide has taught you something new and/or interesting and most importantly that you had fun.

Citations:

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3. <http://www.tourist-information-dublin.co.uk/isoldes-tower.htm>
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