

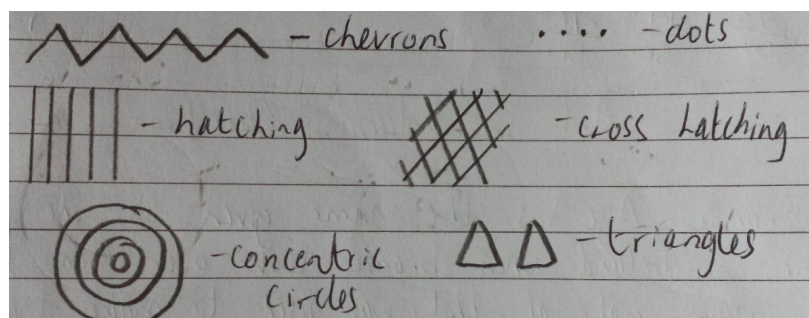
## 2017 Higher Level Mock Exam Question

*The metalworking and artistic skills developed during the Bronze Age in Ireland produced artefacts that are treasured worldwide. Discuss this statement with reference to the illustrations on the accompanying sheet. In your answer name both types of artefact and refer to form, function and the techniques used in their production and decoration AND name and describe one other Bronze Age artefact which was made using similar techniques. Illustrate your answer. [Image of lunula and torc]*

The Bronze Age is the name given to the period in Ireland when bronze took over from stone as the main material that was used to make tools, weapons and decorative pieces. When the Beaker people arrived in Ireland from mainland Europe in search of metals, they brought their techniques in metalworking and art with them. From these people and the Irish goldsmiths who followed them we now possess artefacts that are treasured worldwide, dating from early Bronze Age (2000-1500 BC), the Middle Bronze Age (1500-1200 BC) and the Late Bronze Age (1200-500 BC). Two such artefacts that were quite commonly crafted are the lunula and the torc.

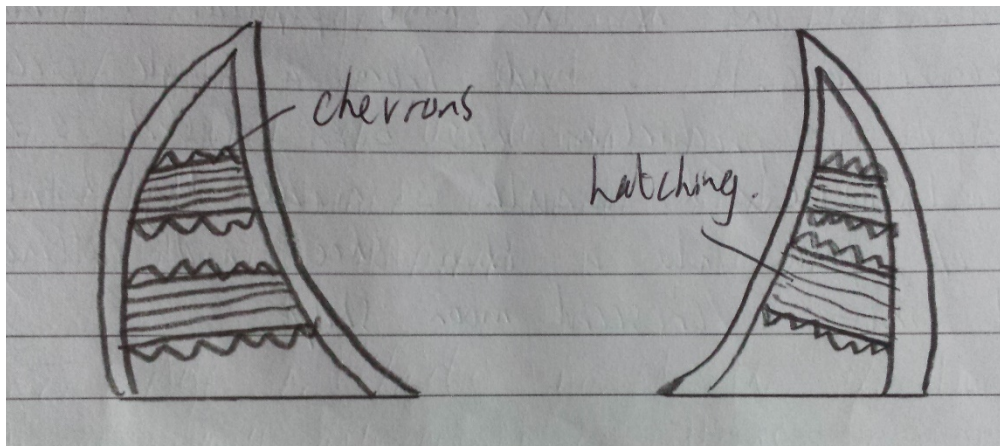
### Lunula

The lunula is one of the most popular artefacts of the bronze age. It is made from a single piece of gold and its production has been dated as far back as 1800 BC. The lunula is made by beating a piece of gold into a thin sheet and cutting this sheet into a crescent moon shape. The function of the lunula would have been a neck piece. We know this because it was made from gold and gold was used to craft decorative and ceremonial pieces, whereas bronze was used for everyday tools and utensils.



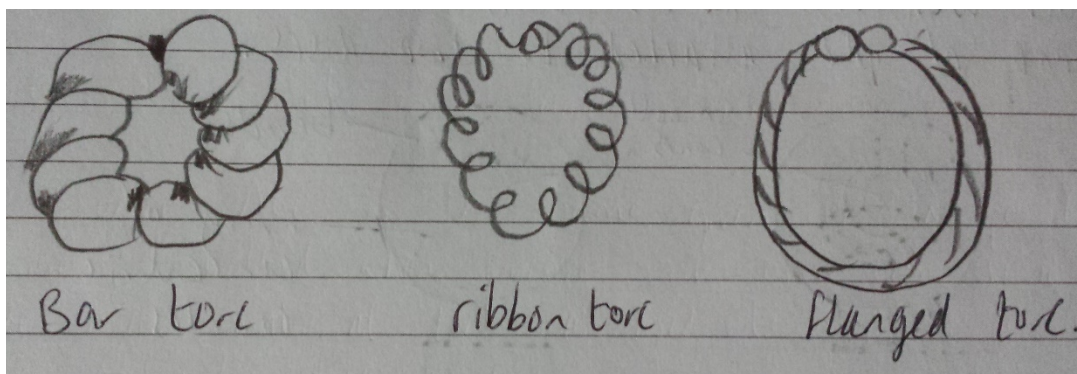
Incision was the most common technique used in artistic decoration on lunulas. This was when the design was cut into the gold on the upper surface. The designs were mostly just simple

geometric shapes such as triangles, dots and circles. On most lunulae the main body of the piece is left undecorated and the edges are patterned with parallel lines, chevrons and hatching. This can particularly be seen in the top corners.

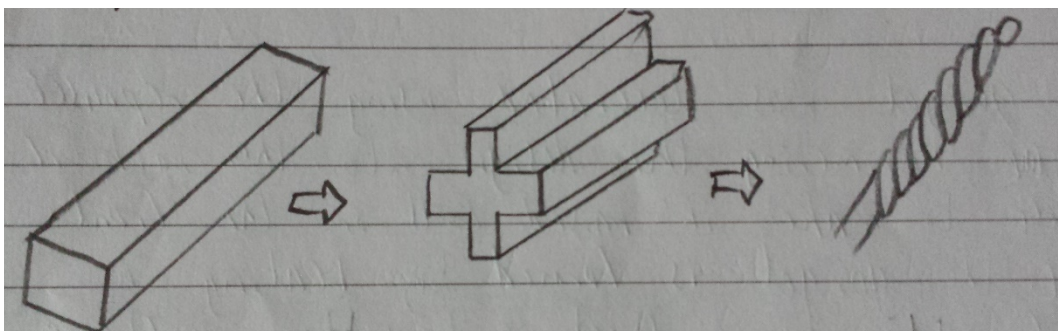


## Torc

The torc, like the lunula, was very popular for its time and was also only made from one sheet of gold. Torcs have been dated back to 1400 BC and show the development of craftsmanship in metalworking techniques during the Bronze Age.



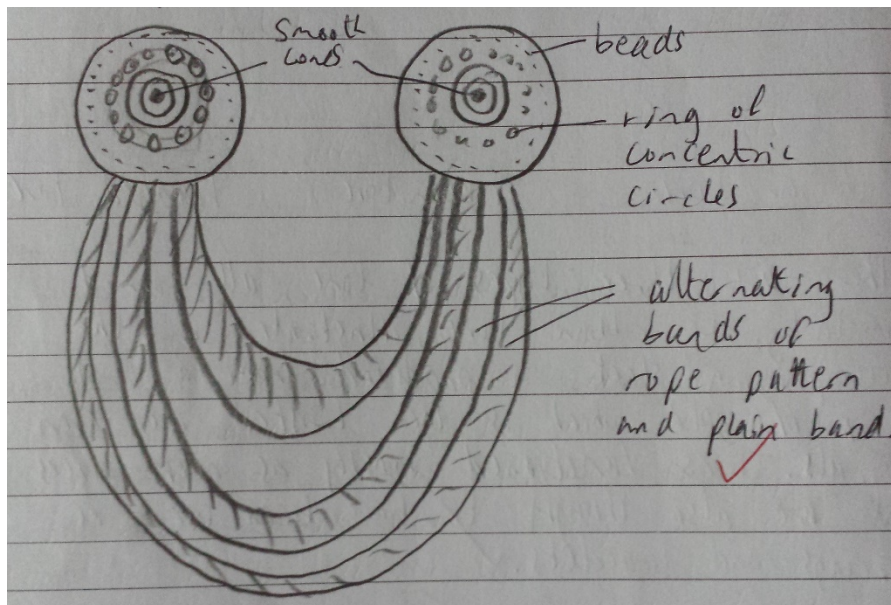
There are three types of torc, all formed similarly. The ribbon torc, illustrated on the accompanying sheet, is produced from a single strip of gold which is then twisted into even spirals. Torcs functioned mostly as neck pieces but are also thought to have been used as earrings and bracelets.



The other torcs were made similarly. A bar of gold was beaten into a cross shape. The arms of the cross were then beaten out to form variations of a spiral shape. The catches on the end of torcs were sometimes elaborate in decoration and other times simple.

### The Gorget

The gorget is another fine example of a Bronze Age artefact. One of the most famous examples was found at the Gleninsheen tomb in the Burren, Co. Clare. The gorget is a sophisticated neck collar that would have been a symbol of high status and wealth. It consists of a semi-circular band of gold attached to two discs.



This gorget was decorated using the repoussé technique, hammering the design into the back of the piece to raise it on the front surface. The gorget is formed by beating a piece of gold into a sheet and cutting a shape like that of the lunula. The discs would then be stitched on with gold wire and the piece would be attached to clothing.

### Conclusion

Bronze Age artefacts showed the effectiveness of simple techniques and geometric patterns through metalwork and artistic skills and are objects that are still studied and cherished internationally today, a true testament to the abilities of those who crafted them.