

IRISH SKEIN



TEACHERS NOTES

MATERIAL QUESTIONS

- What do you think this object might be?
- What would it be used for? (Sharp edges; held in the hand; light and small; metallic)
- Would it have multiple purposes?
- Who did it belong to; what kind of a person would own a weapon like this? (Not a grand weapon, what does the spelling of the name tell us?).
- What was it made of? (Light metal, easy to conceal and carry, far more flexible to use than a broadsword)
- Would it be used by men and women (the Skein was usually associated with male Irish fighters, but was known to be used by women too i.e. the viragos)

WIDER SIGNIFICANCE

- What does it tell us about fighting in Ireland during the rebellion? What kinds of combat were Irish Catholic fighters typically engaged in?
- Research the different conflicts in Ireland during the 1640s.
- What kinds of people were the Irish Catholic fighters?
- Which events influenced propaganda related to Irish Catholics and the rebellion? What was the impact of this propaganda?
- What does this tell us about the wider nature of propaganda during the Civil Wars?
- How do the Viragos relate to the skein, source reliability and attitudes towards Irish Catholics?
- What do the Viragos and their depictions/treatment tell us about gender norms in Ireland at the time? And in England?