



**HISTORY OF THE BRITTONIC-SPEAKING  
PEOPLES FROM THE FOURTH CENTURY TO  
THE TWELFTH**

ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE, AND CELTIC TRIPOS,  
PART I, PAPER 3

**COURSE DESCRIPTION 2011–12**

Course Co-ordinator: Dr Fiona Edmonds

This course concerns the history of Wales, Brittany, Dumnonia, the North Britons and the Picts from the decline of the Roman Empire to the twelfth century. No previous knowledge of the history of the Brittonic-speaking peoples is required, but students should familiarise themselves with the geography of the Brittonic-speaking world. University teaching for the course is conducted in lectures, which take place over a two-year cycle; students who intend to take the subject at Part I are expected to be present at both years' lectures. During the academic year 2011–12 the lectures focus on Brittany and the North Britons, and in 2012–13 they concentrate on Picts, Wales and Dumnonia. The lectures guide students through the subject in broadly chronological order, but the framework of the lectures permits some focus on thematic strands such as the exercise of kingship, the growth of ecclesiastical establishments or the structure of society. Some lectures are devoted to individual texts or particular types of sources, such as inscriptions. In addition to the lectures, supervisions in Brittonic History will be provided by the College for those taking a Preliminary or Part I exam in the subject. In order to prepare for the supervisions, students will be expected to write essays on particular topics. The course has two primary objectives: to give students grounding in the early medieval history of the Brittonic-speaking world and to foster students' understanding of historical technique.

Students wishing to continue with Brittonic History may take the Celtic History paper at Part II, 'Sea-kings and the Celtic-speaking world, 1014–1164'. In addition, students who have not taken Brittonic History in Part I can borrow the Part I paper for Part II of the Tripos. Since the Part I course runs over two years, however, it is advisable that students intending to do this begin attending lectures in their second year.

### **Resources**

The resources available to students include the lecturer and the supervisor. It is easier to broach questions during supervisions than in the formal setting of a lecture, but students are encouraged to seek clarification of points that they did not understand at the end of lectures. Handouts will be provided at the lectures; these materials may include reading lists, pictures of artefacts and extracts from texts. During some of the lectures, visual images (notably maps) will be projected onto a screen. The Powerpoint files may be accessed from the ASNC website > 'Student intranet' > Handouts and course materials > Dr Fiona Edmonds. This page is password-protected and maps may not be reproduced without the permission of Fiona Edmonds. Students' attention is also drawn to the following electronic resource:

CISP: Celtic Inscribed Stones Project: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/cisp/database/>

Links to this and other sites can be found at the departmental website, <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk>.

### **Supervisions**

University teaching will be supplemented by supervisions provided by the College, for which students will write essays on particular topics (eight supervisions will have occurred by the time a student takes the Part I exam). The supervisor will help the student to gain a deeper understanding of primary sources and secondary literature. In addition, guidance will be given on the organisation, presentation and expression of the student's written work. A broad range of subjects will be covered and students will also be given an opportunity to focus on topics of particular interest to them.

### **Introductory reading list**

- W. Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester, 1982; 1989)
- K. Maund, *The Welsh Kings* (Stroud, 2002)
- Julia M. H. Smith, *Province and Empire: Brittany and the Carolingians* (Cambridge, 1992)
- S. M. Foster, *Picts, Gaels and Scots* (London, 1996)
- J. Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland: Scotland to 795* (Edinburgh, 2009)

Detailed reading lists on specific topics will be distributed weekly in lectures and supervisions.

### **Relationship with other courses**

The course complements other papers that are offered by ASNC. The 'History of the Gaelic-speaking peoples' paper enables students to study the history of Scotland from the perspective of Dál Riata. The Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian history papers help students to understand the decline of the kingdoms of Rheged and Gododdin, and the Scandinavian settlements in Wales and Strathclyde, respectively. The Medieval Welsh literature and language paper investigates prose and poetic texts that reveal much about the society and culture of the Brittonic-speaking world.

### **Examinations**

The course is examined in a Preliminary paper which may be taken at the end of the first year; those not taking a Preliminary examination will take a departmental assessment test (PAT) in the subject at the end of the second term. Students offering this paper at Part I will take a Tripos paper at the end of the second year. Prelim and Tripos papers contain a selection of questions, from which candidates must answer four (each question carries 25% of the marks). It is compulsory to answer question one, which features a selection of gobbets (extracts from texts or pictures of artefacts). The candidates must comment on three of the gobbets,

explaining why they are of interest to historians. The gobbets are drawn from primary sources which students will have encountered in lectures and supervisions. Complete sets of past examination papers in the ASNC Tripos are readily available in College libraries and in the University Library. Recent papers are also available on the departmental website. These papers will also be used for purposes of discussion and exam preparation in the Easter Term.

**Structure of lectures and classes**

**Michaelmas Term 2011: Lectures** (for First and Second Year Students)

BRITTANY: a series of eight lectures

**Lent Term 2012: Lectures** (for First and Second Year Students)

NORTH BRITONS: a series of eight lectures

**Easter Term 2012: Revision classes** (for First and Second Year Students)

THEMES AND PROBLEMS IN BRITTONIC HISTORY: a series of four revision classes

**Michaelmas Term 2012: Lectures** (for First and Second Year Students)

THE PICTISH KINGDOMS: a series of eight lectures

**Lent Term 2013: Lectures** (for First and Second Year Students)

WALES AND DUMNONIA: a series of eight lectures

**Easter Term 2013: Revision classes** (for First and Second Year Students)

THEMES AND PROBLEMS IN BRITTONIC HISTORY: a series of four revision classes.

**Should you have any queries about any aspect of the course, please contact Dr Fiona Edmonds ([fle20@cam.ac.uk](mailto:fle20@cam.ac.uk)).**