



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

ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE, AND CELTIC TRIPOS,  
PART I, PAPER 4

**COURSE DESCRIPTION 2011–12**

Course Co-ordinator: Dr Fiona Edmonds

This course concerns the history of Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man from the advent of Christianity to the twelfth century. No previous knowledge of the history of the Gaelic-speaking peoples is required, but students should familiarise themselves with the geography of the Gaelic-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 Ireland, and during 2012–13 they concentrate on Gaelic Scotland and the Isle of Man. 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, ecclesiastical history 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 Gaelic 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 Gaelic-speaking world and to foster students' understanding of historical technique.

Students wishing to continue with Gaelic 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 offered Gaelic History at 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 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. Many books which appear on the reading lists are available in the ASNC library, and key texts are also found in a number of college libraries. The University Library stocks all of the relevant books and journals. Students' attention is also drawn to the following electronic resources:

(i) CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts ‘The online resource for Irish History, literature and politics’: <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/> (ii) CISP: Celtic Inscribed Stones Project: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/cisp/database/> Links to these and other sites can be found at the departmental website, <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk>.

### **Supervisions**

University teaching will be supplemented by eight 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 the material. 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**

- D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972).
- D. Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (London, 1995)
- T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000)
- N. Edwards, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland* (London, 1990; 1996)
- S. M. Foster, *Picts, Gaels and Scots* (London, 1996)
- A. Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba, 789–1070* (Edinburgh, 2007).

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 Brittonic-speaking peoples’ paper enables students to study the history of Scotland from the Pictish perspective. The Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian history papers help students to understand ecclesiastical links in the ‘Golden Age’, and the Scandinavian settlements, respectively. The ‘Medieval Irish literature and language’ paper investigates prose and poetic texts that reveal much about the society and culture of the Gaelic-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

Tripas paper at the end of the second year. Prelim and Tripas 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 Tripas 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)

**IRELAND:** a series of eight lectures.

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

**IRELAND (CONTINUED):** a series of eight lectures.

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

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

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

**DÁL RIATA AND ALBA:** a series of eight lectures.

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

**THE KINGDOM OF THE SCOTS AND THE GAELIC-SCANDINAVIAN WORLD:** a series of eight lectures.

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

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

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