

## Part I, Paper 8

# Medieval Irish language and literature

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This course is intended to provide, over two years, an introduction to Medieval Irish language and literature, from the time of the earliest written records down to about 1200. No previous knowledge of Irish is either expected or required. University teaching for the course is conducted in a series of 36 text classes in the first year (classes are twice-weekly in the Michaelmas and Lent terms, and weekly in the Easter term), and a series of 28 text classes in the second year (twice-weekly in either the Michaelmas or Lent term and weekly in the other two terms). These introduce students to the basic grammatical features of Old Irish and to a number of specific set texts which are studied in detail. Classes in the third term will also provide practice in the translation of unseen passages. Students will be expected to prepare for the classes in advance. Text classes will be supplemented by two series of sixteen lectures each (weekly in the Michaelmas and Lent terms) on specific aspects of Medieval Irish literature. The two series will be given in alternate years. Students will be expected to do some preparatory reading of texts in translation and secondary material for the lectures on Medieval Irish literature. University teaching will be supplemented by a series of eight supervisions provided by the College for which students will write essays on particular topics (literary and linguistic).

By the end of their first year, students should understand the grammatical features of Old Irish and be able to read some basic Old Irish texts and translate elementary unseen passages. In addition, they should have acquired an understanding of the rich and varied corpus of Old and Middle Irish literature. By the end of their second year, they should have consolidated their understanding of Old Irish Grammar, acquired some knowledge of basic Middle Irish changes and be able to translate more advanced Old Irish texts (including some which display early Middle Irish features). In addition, students should have deepened their understanding of Old and Middle Irish literature.

Students can take either a Preliminary Assessment Test or a Preliminary Examination in this paper in their first year. The course is examined in a three-hour Tripos Examination (Part I) the end of the second year.

For students wishing to continue with Medieval Irish, an advanced paper is offered in Part II of the Tripos. In addition, students who have not taken Medieval Irish in Part I can borrow the Part I paper for Part II of the Tripos. As the Part I course runs over two years, however, students intending to do this may wish to begin attending lectures and text classes in their second year.