



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 2018-19

Course Co-ordinator: Dr Ali Bonner (acb64@cam.ac.uk)

This course concerns the history of Wales, Brittany, Cornwall, 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. By the end of the course, it is hoped that students will have acquired a broad knowledge of events and themes in the history of the Brittonic-speaking world, as well as an understanding of various types of primary sources.

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 2017–18 the lectures will focus on the impact of Christianity, Brittany and the North Britons, and in 2018–19 they will concentrate on lowland Britain, the Picts and Wales. 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, which they prepare from guided reading.

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 it is advisable that students intending to do this begin attending lectures in their second year.

Resources

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. After lectures the Powerpoint files and handouts may be accessed from the Brittonic History Moodle site, which is managed by Dr Bonner. The Moodle site also hosts the 'pre-lecture reading' (short articles that can be read before the lecture, in order to aid students' understanding of the lecture) and some tests and quizzes that can be used after lectures or during the revision period.

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 a topic of particular interest to them.

Introductory reading list

- T. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons* (Oxford, 2013)
- 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 that students are likely to have encountered in lectures and supervisions. Past examination papers in the ASNC Tripos are available in College libraries and in the University Library, and are also available on the departmental website.

Aims of the course

This course aims to teach:

1. a detailed knowledge of aspects of the history of the Brittonic-speaking peoples in the period covered
2. critical thinking based on the source-critical method
3. facility in switching between analysis and meta-analysis
4. a habit of self-awareness and critical reflection in the learning process
5. composition of written academic argument
6. a love of study and of this subject

Assessable learning outcomes

At the end of the course students will be able to:

1. evaluate different types of source and their limitations
2. create persuasive arguments on the topics studied using primary sources and secondary literature
3. summarise key historiographical debates on the history of the Brittonic-speaking peoples
4. summarise shifts in historiography concerning the Brittonic-speaking peoples

Structure of lectures

Michaelmas Term 2018: Lectures (for First and Second Year Students)

LOWLAND BRITAIN & THE PICTISH KINGDOMS: a series of eight lectures

Lent Term 2019: Lectures (for First and Second Year Students)

CORNWALL & WALES: a series of eight lectures

Easter Term 2019: Revision classes (for First and Second Year Students)

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

Michaelmas Term 2019: Lectures (for First and Second Year Students)

BRITTANY & THE IMPACT OF ASCETIC CHRISTIANITY: a series of eight lectures

Lent Term 2020: Lectures (for First and Second Year Students)

THE NORTH BRITONS: a series of eight lectures

Easter Term 2020: Revision classes (for First and Second Year Students)

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

Should you have any queries about any aspect of the course, please contact Dr Ali Bonner (acb64@cam.ac.uk).