

Professor Robin Chapman Stacey

The **James Lydon Lectures** in Medieval History and Culture 2023

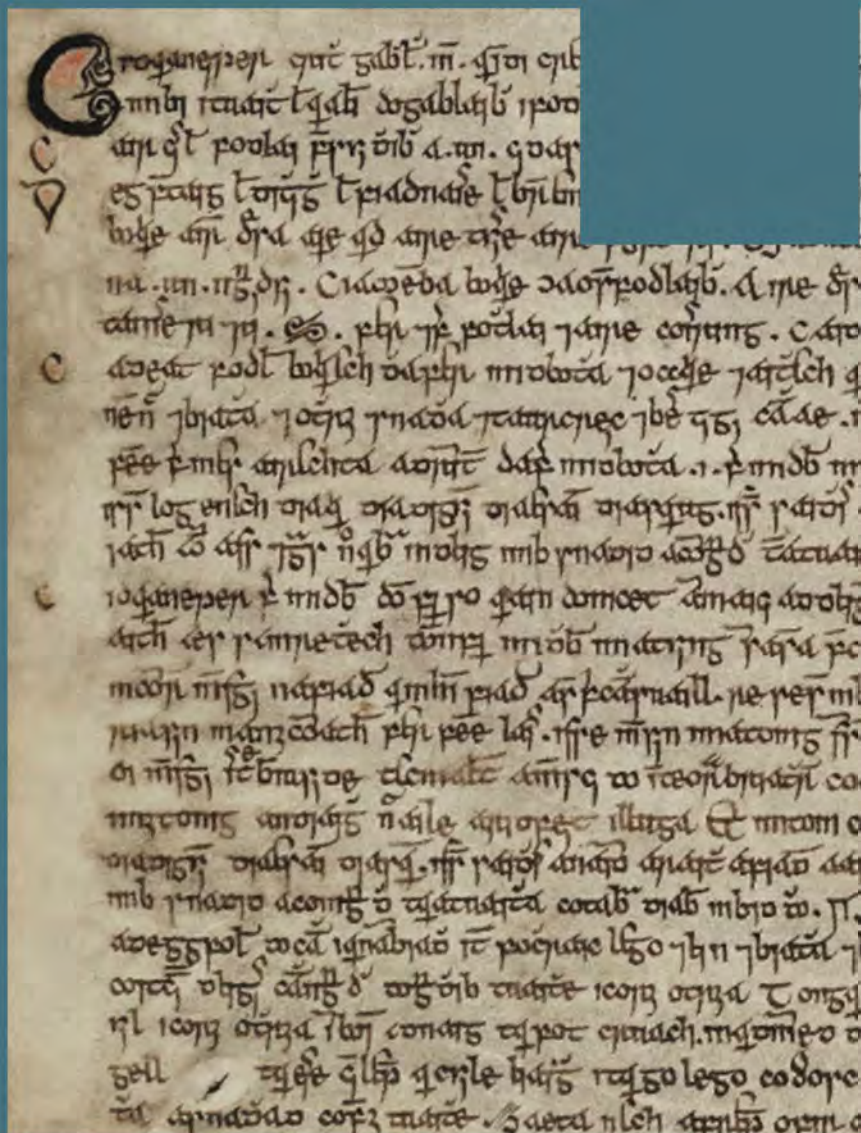
Did Ireland Have an Early Middle Ages?

Robert Emmet
Theatre
Trinity College
Dublin

**Monday, 13
November 2023**
@ 6.30 pm

Admission Free
All Welcome

Registration Essential via
Eventbrite



Organized by the Trinity Medieval History Research Centre

<http://www.tcd.ie/medieval-history/events/lydon-lectures/>

Putting Ireland at the Centre — Rethinking the Social Imaginary of the Early Medieval West

The Lydon Lectures for 2023 presented by Professor Robin Chapman Stacey take up a paradox that has baffled and annoyed the presenter of this series for the entirety of her professional career. Ireland preserves more vernacular texts than anywhere else in the early medieval West, including a body of vernacular law written between 650–800 that is three times larger than the size of the corresponding corpus from early England, and yet Ireland and Irish sources are treated as almost entirely peripheral to “what matters” in almost all academic and popular histories of the period. At best, Irish sources appear as points of comparison for a narrative suggested entirely by events elsewhere; at worst, they are proffered as evidence for the enduring eccentricity of the Hibernian realms.

In this series, we shall reverse the usual approach by putting Ireland at the centre and using English and Frankish sources for comparison. Front and centre will be the issue of how these societies imagined themselves through the medium of law. The aim is not so much to rewrite the history of early medieval Europe as to enrich and complicate it. What questions might we be asking if we realized we had the texts to answer them? How might our views on early medieval gender and community change if Beowulf and the mead hall were not all we thought we had to go on? And what was written law “for” anyway?

Programme of Events

PUBLIC LECTURE

Did Ireland Have an Early Middle Ages?

Monday, 13 November 2023 at 6.30 pm
Robert Emmet Lecture Theatre
Arts Building, Trinity College Dublin

Pre-registration via Eventbrite essential.

Subsequent in-person events for Medieval History seminar group are by invitation only.

LECTURE 2

Law and Language in the Early Middle Ages: A New Take on an Old Question

Tuesday, 14 November 2023 @ 11.15
Arts Faculty Conference Room

LECTURE 3

Imagining Gender

Tuesday, 14 November @ 5.15 pm
Arts Faculty Conference Room

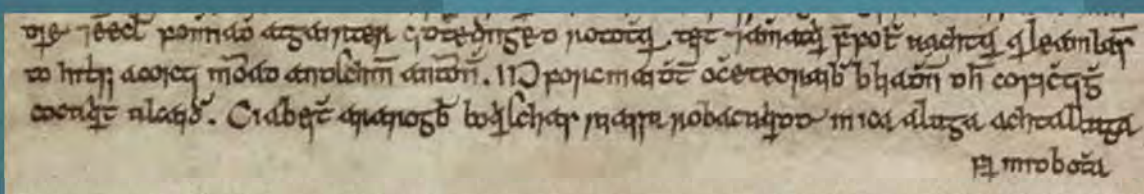
LECTURE 4

Imagining Community

Wednesday, 15 November @ 5.15 pm
Phoenix House Seminar Room (PX2.1)

Postgraduate Workshop

Arts Building, Room 3138
Wednesday, 15 November 2023 @ 2.30 pm





The **James Lydon** Lectures in Medieval History and Culture

It was in the millennium between the fall of Rome and the Reformation—commonly known as the ‘Middle Ages’—that Europe emerged as something more than an idea, and many of the institutions, cultural forces and political ideas we associate with the ‘modern’ world were born. What is the continuing relevance of this era for contemporary Irish and European society? And how are we to understand medieval history and culture on its own terms, rather than through the distorting prism of presentist concerns? These are among the most urgent and problematic questions facing medieval scholarship today.

The Lydon Lectures provide a platform for a distinguished lecturer to reflect on these issues and to convey specialist findings to a mixed audience of academic specialists, students and members of the public.

Previous Lydon lecturers include Professor **John Gillingham**, Emeritus Professor of History at the London School of Economics (2014); Professor **Robert Bartlett**, University of St Andrews (2017); and Professor **Rosamond McKitterick**, University of Cambridge (2018).

The series is named for **James Francis Lydon** who died on 25 June 2013. Professor Lydon was a towering figure in the Department of History, Trinity College Dublin. Successor in the Lecky Chair of History to Edmund Curtis and Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, he combined the best of both, exuding Curtis’s empathetic warmth for the human story of Ireland’s past while sharing Otway-Ruthven’s fascination for Anglo-Irish institutional history.

In his long and distinguished career, Professor Lydon produced a series of seminal works on the history of Ireland, including: *The Lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages* (1972, 2003); *Ireland in the Later Middle Ages* (1973); *England and Ireland in the Later Middle Ages* (ed., 1981); *The English in Medieval Ireland* (ed., 1984); and *The Making of Ireland: From Ancient Times to the Present* (1998).

The Trinity Medieval History Research Centre

The Lydon Lectures are organized by the Trinity Medieval History Research Centre. The Centre promotes research into the history of Ireland, Europe and the wider world in the Middle Ages. Our approach to the past is interdisciplinary, with a particular interest in digital humanities.

The Centre provides a venue and forum for the interaction and the exchange of ideas among medievalists based in Trinity and Dublin more generally, as well as for distinguished visiting scholars from further afield.



About the speaker

Robin Chapman Stacey is an historian of the European Middle Ages focusing particularly on Ireland, Wales, and England from the Iron Age through the thirteenth century. She has taught at the University of Washington since 1988. She holds graduate degrees from Yale and Oxford, and her particular academic interest is law, especially the vernacular laws of Ireland and Wales.

Over the years, Prof Stacey's research has come to centre on three main issues within the field of medieval Irish and Welsh law: legal education, law and its relationship to language (particularly the vernacular), and the literary aspects of legal writing.

She has also written on the subject of women in the medieval period, and has recently begun teaching and publishing on the mythology of J.R.R. Tolkien.

Publications

Law and the Imagination in Medieval Wales. 2018.

Dark Speech: The Performance of Law in Early Ireland. 2007.

The Road to Judgment. 1994.



Distinguished guest participants

Prof Clare Downham

University of Liverpool

Prof Dáibhí Ó Cróinín

University of Galway

Prof Clare Stancliffe

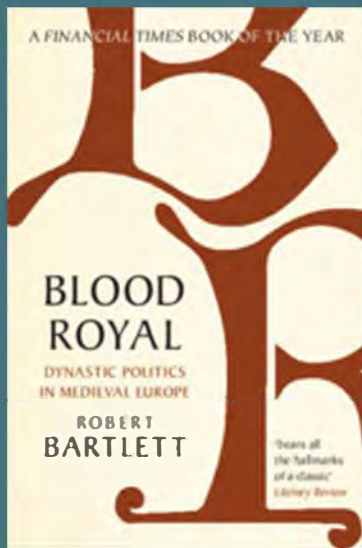
University of Durham



Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
Trinity College Dublin

Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

The James Lydon Lectures in Medieval History and Culture Titles Now Available from Cambridge University Press



Blood Royal: Dynastic Politics in Medieval Europe

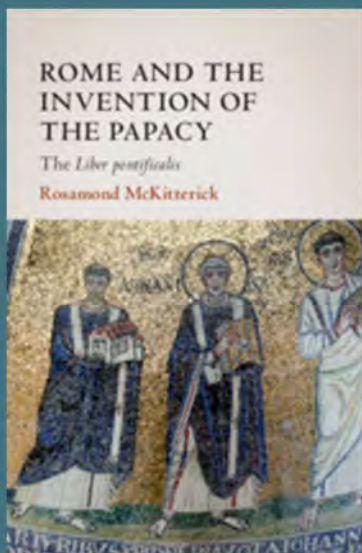
The Lydon Lectures 2017

Robert Bartlett

Cambridge University Press 2020

'Blood Royal is a tour de force. In dynastic politics, Bartlett has found a huge subject that has yet been little explored. He has researched it magisterially, ranging Europe-wide across vast numbers of sources in classical and vernacular European languages.'

— Janet L. Nelson



Rome and the Invention of the Papacy: *The Liber Pontificalis*

The Lydon Lectures 2018

Rosamond McKitterick

Cambridge University Press 2020

'With this book, Rosamond McKitterick makes a powerful contribution to medieval history. Her thorough study demonstrates the construction of the papacy through the act of collective biography embodied in the Liber Pontificalis, enabling us to look with new eyes at the city of Rome during its momentous transition from imperial capital to centre of western Christianity.'

— Marios Costambeys