

List 1

HIU34091/92: Women on the Edge: the frontier, colonisation and their impacts on women in Ireland, c.1295-1450 (Sparky Booker)



Gerald of Wales' *Topography of Ireland* (BL Royal 13.B.viii)

Women living in Ireland from the English conquest in 1169 onward inhabited a society deeply marked by the processes of colonisation and by the militarised nature of frontier life. The colonisation project was justified by a dualistic worldview and the presentation of the Irish as 'enemies', but this went hand in hand with constant interaction, intermarriage and political and economic cooperation between English and Irish, in which women played an essential part. Across the island, frequent military activity and unsettled conditions influenced the ways in which women could exercise power, control their assets and make choices about their lives.

This module will examine the nature and extent of the impacts of the frontier and colonization on women of both Irish and English descent, through in-depth analysis and discussion of primary sources from the period (in translation). Relevant secondary readings relating both to Ireland and, for comparison, Britain and Europe will be provided to support students' interpretation of the primary sources. The module introduces students to gendered ways of looking at Ireland's medieval past and understanding the impacts of English colonisation and settlement on the island. It interrogates women's strategies for wielding influence, navigating marriage and family life and pursuing their own aims and agendas in later medieval Ireland.