

## HI 1202

# IRELAND c.1000-1250: BRIAN BORU TO THE ENGLISH INVASION

**Course Organiser:** Seán Duffy (sduffy@tcd.ie)

**Duration:** Michaelmas Term (Sept-Dec)

**Contact hours:** 2 hrs per week plus tutorials

**Weighting:** 10 ECTS

### **1. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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This module begins with the iconic battle of Clontarf in 1014 at which the high-king, Brian Boru, fought enemies that included the descendants of the Viking founders of Dublin. Study is made of the after-effects of the Vikings on Irish society, before moving to examine the causes and implications of the English invasion of the late twelfth century, especially the ensuing upheaval in Irish political life and Anglo-Irish relations. The module also offers a critical evaluation of the changing role of the church in medieval Irish life, and attention is paid to the patterns of human settlement and the physical imprint of man on the landscape: where and how did people live, and what survives today in terms of archaeology and architecture?

### **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

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#### **Aim:**

The course aims to provide students with a basic understanding of political, social and ecclesiastical developments in Ireland during the High and Later Middle Ages, by introducing essential knowledge and key concepts.

#### **Learning outcomes:**

By the end of the course, students should be able to

- outline chronologically the key developments in Ireland c.1000-c.1250
- offer explanations for the key developments in the period
- evaluate the significance of those key developments and appreciate their impact on the subsequent course of Irish history
- search for, and critically appraise, relevant literature
- undertake an analysis of select contemporary records (in translation)

#### **Personal and transferable skills:**

This course is intended to sharpen skills in

- written and verbal communication (explanation and argument), through essay work and tutorial discussion
- capacity for independent learning, through preparation for essays and tutorials
- IT, including word-processing and internet retrieval, through preparation for tutorials and essays
- documentary analysis, through the study of extracts from primary (i.e., contemporary medieval) sources

**Attitudinal Skills:**

Specifically, this course is intended to enhance appreciation and awareness of

- the structures of medieval Irish society, how it functioned, and the ways in which it differed from or mirrored contemporary society elsewhere
- the importance of kingship, and especially the position of the high-king
- the role of the church in medieval Irish life
- patterns of settlement and the physical imprint of man on the landscape
- the impact of the Vikings on Irish society and politics
- the causes and implications of the English invasion
- the effects on Ireland of the assertion of English lordship, especially the ensuing upheaval in Irish political life
- the social, cultural and economic impact of English colonization

### 3. ESSAY TITLES

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1. Evaluate the role of kin in the organization of Irish society in the early Middle Ages.
2. 'Brian Bóruma did not create a high-kingship of Ireland: he built on foundations that had been laid over the preceding centuries by the Uí Néill, north and south' (F.J. Byrne). Discuss.
3. When did Dublin become the *de facto* capital of Ireland?
4. 'There are many signs that post-Clontarf Ireland was responding to the new ideas which were transforming Europe' (Lydon). Discuss.
5. Why were the twelfth-century reformers so anxious to ensure that the Irish church was restructured into territorial dioceses under the rule of bishops?
6. Analyze Ireland's relationship with either Scotland or Wales in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
7. The English invasion of Ireland was 'an accident, unforeseen and unplanned' (Ó Corráin). Discuss.
8. Have historians exaggerated the transformation wrought by the English invasion?
9. 'John, so often described as the worst of kings of England was, paradoxically, the best for Ireland' (F.X. Martin). Discuss.
10. How widespread and how effective was Irish opposition to English rule in the first century after the invasion?
11. Which was the more important element in the English attempt to conquer Ireland, encastellation or colonization?
12. Critically compare the approach to their subject of G.H.Orpen in *Ireland under the Normans 1169-1333* (Oxford, 1911-20) and Edmund Curtis in *A History of Medieval Ireland* (London, 1923, 2nd edn 1938).

#### 4. INTRODUCTORY READING

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**Easy reads:**

- Seán Duffy, *Ireland in the Middle Ages* (London, 1997).
- R.F. Foster (ed.), *The Oxford illustrated history of Ireland* (Oxford, 1989).
- Robin Frame, *Colonial Ireland, 1169-1369* (Dublin, 1981) [out of print; available in library].
- James Lydon, *The lordship of Ireland in the middle ages* (Dublin, 1972, 2nd edn 2003).
- Donncha Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972) [out of print; available in library].

**More difficult reads:**

- Francis John Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Dublin, 2001).
- Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A new history of Ireland II: medieval Ireland* (Oxford, 1987, 1993).
- Edmund Curtis, *A history of medieval Ireland* (2nd ed., London, 1938) [out of print; available in library].
- Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A new history of Ireland I: prehistoric and early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005).
- G.H. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (1st published, Oxford, 1911-20; one-vol. edition, Dublin, 2005).
- A.J. Otway-Ruthven, *A history of medieval Ireland* (London, 1968, 1980) [out of print; available in library].

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George Cunningham, *The Anglo-Norman advance into the south-west midlands of Ireland* (1987).

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### ***The thirteenth century***

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