In this episode I talked with Dr Caoimhe Whelan and Dr Sparky Booker about the Friends of Medieval Dublin and the representation of the Middle Ages in popular media and western politics.

The Friends of Medieval Dublin is a vibrant community of scholars committed to raising the profile of the medieval city. They provide multiple forms of public outreach including a symposium, lunchtime lectures, and walking tours during National Heritage Week every August. Dr Caoimhe Whelan is the honorary secretary of the Friends and Dr Sparky Booker is a prominent member of the organization. I was invited to join the Friends while studying the life of a medieval Dubliner for my PhD at Trinity College Dublin.

Television is experiencing a golden age. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant many of us are confined to our homes with the result of a huge increase in the quantity of and rate at which we are consuming TV. Epics such as Game of Thrones and Vikings have provided an escape from the realities of present life. Each of these programmes present a more complex view of the Middle Ages. In this episode Dr Booker
and Dr Whelan express their uses of these new multi-media examples in and outside of the classroom. We discuss the role and impact that television and film can have to broaden the dialogue between academics and the public.

I’ve also experimented with using television and film to broaden the dialogue between academics and the public by founding Trinity HistoryCon held every November at the Long Room Hub. At the conference we encourage visitors to dress in costume, hear presentations, and participate in historical demonstrations.

![Crowd at the Wood Quay March, 1979 (photo from rte.ie)](image)

FMD began as a group of activists set on protecting Wood Quay in 1979. Studying history is not limited to reading books. It can be a contact sport. Representation takes many forms. In the 1970s the medieval city graced local newspapers due to an outpouring of public concern leading up to the infamous march led by Professor F.X. Martin. Forty years later the world continues to challenge and demand more faithful representations of modern and historical populations. Studying medieval women who litigated without the assistance of men has taught me to never take any assumption for granted. Representation matters. The Middle Ages were filled with colour, humour, many languages, faiths, abilities, and sexualities. It is the responsibility of educators and consumers to demand books, film, television, and video games which give space to diversity. Get involved. When we stand together we can accomplish the impossible. Everytime I see the photographs of the Wood Quay march I am inspired. We also belong to a generation hallmarked by protest. What a sight to see over 1000 years of people mobilising for social change all sharing the same streets medieval Dubliners walked. Well, maybe not the paving but at least the space!

To read more about the protests follow this link: [https://www.historyireland.com/volume-22/heritage-outrage-wood-quay/](https://www.historyireland.com/volume-22/heritage-outrage-wood-quay/)
To take a virtual walking tour of medieval Dublin visit the FMD YouTube page: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzbBWN0Ddk1ly631QfYF2KQ

For more information on an interactive conference held at Trinity every November on this topic, please visit. www.duhistorycon.wordpress.com

The humanities and the medieval world offer different solutions to current issues. If you’d like to stay in touch with the Friends, find resources, or ask questions, please visit their website www.fmd.ie or visit their Twitter feed: https://twitter.com/FMDublin or search for their Twitter handle: @FMDublin and on Facebook.

To read Dr Whelan's address and history of FMD please follow this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OrGiUZEvL6agQbLQ9OfGJ0IAZr4hoKnP/view?usp=sharing

You can follow Dr Caoimhe Whelan on Twitter @CaoimheWhelan

You can follow Dr Sparky Booker on Twitter @BookerSpaky

You can follow Dawn Seymour Klos on Twitter @Medieval_Panda

To experience Viking and Medieval Dublin please visit Dublinia. www.dublinia.ie