

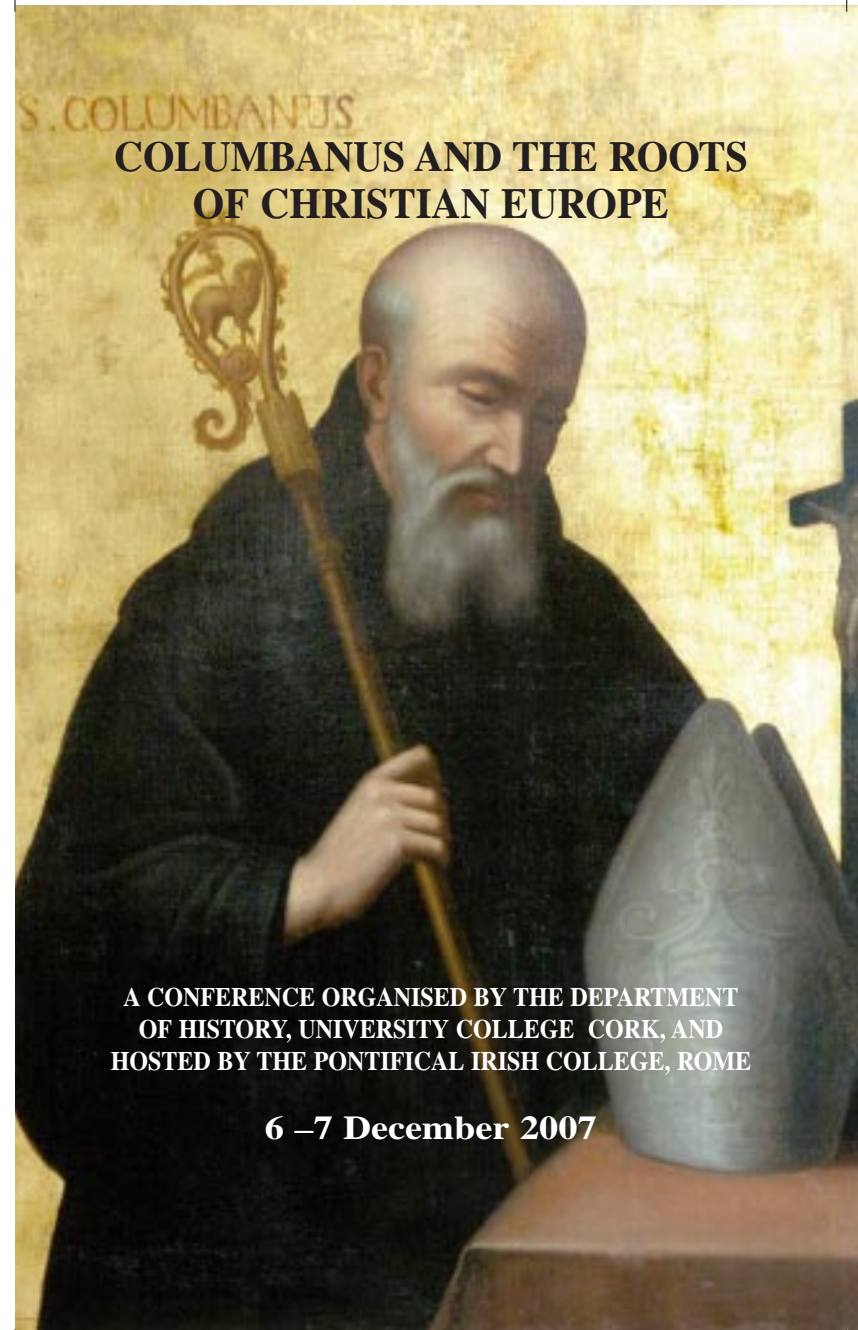
**St Columbanus of Bobbio** (c.543 – 615) is one of the greatest and most influential of Irishmen of the middle ages. His impact on the cultural and spiritual life of the West was immense. His foundations and Rules facilitated the emergence of the monastic culture of early medieval Europe. He left an extensive literary corpus including letters, sermons and regulations governing the Christian life. He was the first to express in writing a sense of Irish identity, and the first Irishman to leave a lasting impression in lands outside Ireland. A conference to mark that achievement has been organised by the Department of History, University College Cork, Ireland and will take place in the Pontifical Irish College, Rome, Italy, on 6 and 7 December 2007. It will examine Columbanus's impressive legacy and present fresh insights into his understanding of the nature of authority, his attitude to Rome, his sense of identity, and the enduring influence of his writings and mission.

The conference will bring together the major scholars in the field of Columbanian studies from Ireland, Britain and continental Europe who will examine aspects of Columbanus's training in Ireland, the impact of his mission on European monasticism and the sense of identity he expressed as an Irishman in a European context.

The conference will be held at the Pontifical Irish College, Via dei Santi Quattro, 1 - 00184 Rome. Those wishing to attend are invited to contact Dr Damian Bracken, Department of History, University College Cork, Ireland; Tel. 00353 – 21 – 490 2950; email [D.Bracken@ucc.ie](mailto:D.Bracken@ucc.ie) Website <http://columbanus.ucc.ie>



'S. Columbanus', Pontificio Collegio Irlandese, Roma



## **COLUMBANUS AND THE ROOTS OF CHRISTIAN EUROPE**

**A CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY THE DEPARTMENT  
OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK, AND  
HOSTED BY THE PONTIFICAL IRISH COLLEGE, ROME**

**6 –7 December 2007**



#### THURSDAY 6 DECEMBER

**19.45 Welcome: Msgr Liam Bergin,**  
Rector Pontifical Irish College

**19.50 Introduction: Professor Dermot Keogh**  
Dept of History, University College Cork, Ireland

**20.00 Dr Clare Stancliffe,**  
Department of History, Durham University, UK  
*Columbanus's monasticism*

Columbanus is a crucial figure both because of his impact, and because his monasticism is considerably better documented than that of any other Irish religious of the formative period. Yet questions abound: how does his practice relate to continental tradition, including the Rule of St Benedict? or to Irish tradition? or is it idiosyncratic? This paper will probe the sources and seek to carry our understanding further.

#### FRIDAY 7 DECEMBER

**10.00 Prof. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín**  
Dept of History, University College Galway, Ireland  
*Columbanus and his teachers*

This talk will consider the question of Columbanus's education in Ireland before he left for the continent and will look at the evidence for the state of Irish monastic schools in the late sixth century.

**10.45 Prof. Dr Michael Richter,**  
Dept of History, University of Konstanz, Germany  
*Columbanus's Irish formation*

Columbanus's Latin is of a high standard. He would have acquired it in Ireland. This paper investigates the background and context of this phenomenon

**11.30 Coffee**

**12.00 Dr Diarmuid Scully,**  
Dept of History, University College Cork, Ireland  
*From Ocean to Rome: the worlds of Columbanus and Gildas in their Classical geographical context*

This study of the sense of place and the past in Columbanus and Gildas explores the role played by Graeco-Roman ideas in shaping the Early Insular understanding of world history and geography.

**12.45 Lunch** (own arrangements)

**14.00 Dr Jennifer O'Reilly,**  
Dept of History, University College Cork, Ireland  
*Columbanus and Augustine of Canterbury on the reconciling of difference.*

This paper considers some of the themes of Columbanus's Epistle II in a wider patristic and Insular context.

**14.45 Dr Damian Bracken**  
Dept of History, University College Cork, Ireland  
*Columbanus, Ireland and the universal Church*  
Columbanus acknowledged Rome's special position as the focus for unity within the universal church, yet was forthright in his criticism when he felt it was warranted. This paper considers Columbanus's skilful appeal to the traditions of SS Peter and Paul both to show his loyalty and assert his duty to criticise.

**15.30 Coffee**

**16.00 Dr Charles Doherty**  
School of History and Archives, U. C. D., Ireland  
*Columbanus: an Irishman in Europe*  
This paper explores a conceit that Columbanus uses in his writings — that is the insignificance of himself and the Irish at the edge of the known world. This should lead to an examination of how he sees the position of himself and his fellow Irish in Europe.

**16.45 Closing remarks**

To mark the occasion, a display of archival documents on the 1923 Irish National Pilgrimage to the last of Columbanus's foundations, at Bobbio, will be selected from the holdings of the Pontifical Irish College's archives by Ms Vera Orschel, College Archivist. Prof. Dermot Keogh, Department of History, UCC, will introduce the display.

