



Citation **Fergus Kelly**

Fergus Kelly is a renaissance man who has been described as the person who made early Irish law widely accessible. He has written widely on numerous topics from Irish law, medicine, mythology, cosmology, farming, beekeeping, ancient Irish trees, to the history of the horse in Early Irish society. He graduated from Trinity College Dublin with an Honours Degree in Early and Modern Irish in 1967, and subsequently spent a year in the Linguistics Institute at the University of Oslo. Fergus also taught a course in Celtic Civilisation at the University of Toronto, but his central interest has always been in early Irish legal documents.



Other related interests include the natural history of Ireland; history of domestic livestock; development of Irish crops; human uses of wild plants; bees, honey, and beekeeping; and the relationship between documentary and archaeological evidence. Fergus was awarded a LittD in 1987, and was elected as a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 2004, and was awarded the Derek Allen prize in Celtic Studies by the British Academy in 2012. On the 28th June 2014, a one day law conference was held in honour of Professor Fergus Kelly in the School of Celtic Studies, DIAS.

Fergus is currently an Emeritus Senior Professor at the School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS). His main area of research has been in religious and legal texts in Irish from the seventh to twelfth centuries AD. In 1976 he completed an edition and translation of a seventh-century text on kingship, entitled *Audacht Morainn*. In 1983, he co-edited *Bechbretha*: an Old Irish law-tract on bee-keeping, which was reprinted with a new appendix in 2009. In 1988 he published *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, a general account of the native Irish legal system often referred to as 'Brehon Law'. In 1997, he published *Early Irish Farming: A Study based mainly on the law-texts of the seventh and eighth centuries AD*. In this work he devoted a chapter to 'Diet and Cooking', including a discussion on Feasting, Food for invalids, Taboo Foods, Hunger and Famine. Many of the law-texts contain detailed information on Irish agriculture, stock-raising, wildlife and landscape, and some of them have been edited and translated for the first time in the Appendices to *Early Irish Farming*. He has recently completed an edition and translation of a ninth-century proverbial text entitled *The Triads of Ireland*.

The Dublin Gastronomy Symposium Fellowship Award is being presented to Professor Kelly in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Irish food history. In the 2024 *Irish Food History: A Companion* (Royal Irish Academy: EU+ Academic Press), Kelly's publications are the most frequently cited across numerous chapters, often preceded by the words 'wonderful' and 'magisterial'.

