



The 35th Irish Conference of Historians

Hosted by the Irish Committee for Historical Sciences
and Maynooth University Department of History

Maynooth University, 12–13 September 2025

Inner Lives and Outer Realities

How does the individual experience history? How are lives lived against the backdrop of conflict and revolutions, of social transformation and religious change? Such questions raise a central issue of historical interpretation – that concerning the relationship between the exercise of individual agency and the circumscribing influence of social, political and cultural context. This relationship – or perhaps, more accurately, this *tension* – was famously captured by Karl Marx: ‘men make their own history,’ he observed, ‘but they do not make it as they please’. Taking a lead from Emma Rothschild’s 2011 study, *The inner life of empires*, a book which uses a single family to explore the revolutionary transformations – political, intellectual and imperial – of the eighteenth century, the 2025 Irish Conference of Historians will seek to interrogate this relationship. Keynote addresses will be delivered by Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne (Trinity College Dublin) and Professor M’Hamed Oualdi (European University Institute), and paper and panel proposals are invited on the theme, broadly defined, of ‘Inner Lives and Outer Realities’. These may include, but are not limited to, proposals addressing the individual’s experience of war and conflict; social transformation; urbanisation; religious change (including, especially, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation); cultural and linguistic change; revolution; and colonisation and de-colonisation.

Proposals should be sent to ich2025@mu.ie by 31 March 2025. A limited number of bursaries covering the conference registration fee and campus accommodation will be available to doctoral researchers and precariously employed academics. Applicants wishing to be considered for a bursary should indicate this clearly when submitting their proposals.