

THE TRINITY COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY PRESENTS

# GERMANIZING THE ENGLISH PAST

Anglo-Saxon Studies and Modern Racism,  
C. 1560 - C. 1620

IAN KING



Ian completed a B.A. in history at Trinity College in 2018 before pursuing an M.Phil. in the department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic at the University of Cambridge. He stayed on at Cambridge for his PhD, which was funded by the F. W. Maitland Studentship in Legal History. Ian's research examines perceptions of the Anglo-Saxon past (pre-1066) in sixteenth-and-seventeenth-century England, considering how jurists and other scholars understood the origins of the common law, the English language, and the English people as a distinct ethnic community. Ian has just completed his PhD, and he has a new article on the jurist Sir Edward Coke in *The Seventeenth Century*.



*Hengist and Horsa arriving in Britain, as depicted by Richard Rowlands (1605)*

**April 11, 4:30 p.m.**

**1823 Room (Joslin Room #206), Trinity Library**

This talk will assess how (and more importantly, why) English scholars in the early modern period studied the Anglo-Saxon past, its vernacular language, its people, and its customs. The talk will shed light on how antiquaries, lawyers, and other early modern scholars constructed implicit hierarchies of ethnic desirability, whereby the Germanic origins of the English people was celebrated and elevated above all others. Finally, the talk will address how these scholars laid the groundwork for the racial conception of Anglo-Germanic heritage that was later weaponized to justify white supremacist ideologies and brutal colonial practices abroad.