



In Search of Ancient Ireland: The Origins of the Irish from Neolithic Times to the Coming of the English

Carmel McCaffrey, Leo Eaton

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This engaging book traces the history, archaeology, and legends of ancient Ireland from 9000 B.C., when nomadic hunter-gatherers appeared in Ireland at the end of the last Ice Age to 1167 A.D., when a Norman invasion brought the country under control of the English crown for the first time. So much of what people today accept as ancient Irish history?Celtic invaders from Euproe turning Ireland into a Celtic nation; St. Patrick driving the snakes from Ireland and converting its people to Christianity?is myth and legend with little basis in reality. The truth is more interesting. The Irish, as the authors show, are not even Celtic in an archaeological sense. And there were plenty of bishops in Ireland before a British missionary called Patrick arrived. But *In Search of Ancient Ireland* is not simply the story of events from long ago. Across Ireland today are festivals, places, and folk customs that provide a tangible link to events thousands of years past. The authors visit and describe many of these places and festivals, talking to a wide variety of historians, scholars, poets, and storytellers in the very settings where history happened. Thus the book is also a journey on the ground to uncover ten thousand years of Irish identity. *In Search of Ancient Ireland* is the official companion to the three-part PBS documentary series. With 14 black-and-white photos, 6 b&w illustrations, and 1 map.

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