



Stories from a
Sacred Landscape

Croghan Hill to Clonmacnoise

CAIMIN O'BRIEN

With the flair of a storyteller and the keen eye of a practicing archaeologist, Caimin O'Brien looks beneath the monastic ruins of County Offaly to uncover *Stories from a Sacred Landscape: Croghan Hill to Clonmacnoise*.

O'Brien draws on archaeology, history, poetry, folklore and legend to create vivid portraits of twenty-three sacred places within Offaly. He recounts the tales that surround the county's first saints and the monasteries they founded.

Because four of the five ancient provinces of Ireland met in Offaly, its monasteries played a crucial economic and political role in Irish history. O'Brien follows the stories of Offaly's monastic foundations through tribal conflict, Anglo-Norman conquest, Gaelic Revival, the Reformation and on to the present day.



Lavish illustrations make *Stories from a Sacred Landscape* a visual feast. It features images of Offaly's monastic landscape by the internationally renowned photographer James Fraher.

The book also contains full-colour photographs of the treasures produced in Offaly's monasteries, including exquisite gold, silver and bronze artworks and glorious illuminated manuscripts. In addition, it highlights the artistry of monastic stonemasons and of the county's stained glass windows, many by Harry Clarke Studios.

Stories from a Sacred Landscape is essential reading for anyone with an interest in religion, politics and Irish history. O'Brien's unique and comprehensive approach to his native county will change forever the way that people see Offaly's sacred landscape.





Caimin O'Brien presents a vivid picture of the life and times in the early monastic settlements, highlighting their role in society and their changes in fortune through political upheavals.

This attractive book breaks new ground in presenting a visual feast with excellent photography and design work by James Fraher and Connie Scanlon.

The engaging combination of storytelling, folklore, historical and archaeological facts will appeal to a wide audience whilst providing a valuable contribution to our understanding of how these early monastic sites functioned within society.

—Pat Wallace, Director, National Museum of Ireland

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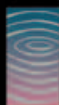
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Stories from a Sacred Landscape

Croghan Hill to Clonmacnoise BY CAIMIN O'BRIEN

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