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An aerial photograph showing a large, square stone tower with crenellations at the top, situated in a green field. In the foreground, there is an archaeological excavation site with a large green tent, various equipment, and several people working within a cleared area. The background shows a rural landscape with fields and distant buildings under a cloudy sky.

# One Hundred Years of University Archaeology in Galway 1924-2024

John Waddell



© John Waddell Galway 2024

The front and back cover illustrations are by Paul Naessens, Western Aerial Survey and Photography Services.  
Front cover: (above) the 15th century tower house at Isert Kelly near Kilchreest and (below) excavation at the Caherconnell Archaeological Field School in the Burren, Co. Clare.

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# One Hundred Years of University Archaeology in Galway 1924-2024

The first Professorship in Archaeology in Galway was created in 1924 in what was then University College Galway. In the following century a succession of professors and lecturers in the subject have made a remarkable contribution to the teaching and study of archaeology both in Ireland and in a wider European context.

Of course there had been some interest in matters archaeological in the earlier Queen's College. In 1864 William King, Professor of Mineralogy, Geology and Natural History, identified some skeletal remains from the Neander Valley in Germany as an early hominid and not those of a recent Mongolian Cossack or a bow-legged Dutchman as claimed by some. He named it *homo neanderthalensis*—Neanderthal Man.

The Galway Archaeological and Historical Society was founded in 1900 and the President of the Queen's College Alexander Anderson and Wilbraham Trench, Professor of History, English Literature and Mental Science, were among its founding members.

Early progress was slow, however, and for over forty years after the appointment of the first incumbent the subject was simply represented by one professor. Eventually with the expansion of the University system in the 1960s, the first lecturer was appointed to support the sole professor in 1967, and very significant progress commenced in both teaching and research.

Over the past century there have been five Established Professors of Archaeology, the last resigned in 2013 for personal reasons and the post has remained unfilled ever since. Sadly Archaeology is not alone in this respect, significant academic vacancies now exist in other subject areas in the University of Galway such as Modern Languages and Celtic Studies.

It is all too easy to overlook the intrinsic educational value of Humanities disciplines like Archaeology, to fail to appreciate their capacity to add to the cultural capital of country and community, or simply not to recognize their significant international dimension.

Such difficulties are not new—University perceptions and priorities change, and their fortunes wax and wane. Over a hundred years ago, the Queen's College Galway

was beset by financial and other difficulties. William Gladstone, the British Prime Minister, is said to have described it, in a memorable phrase, as 'a derelict college in a derelict town'.

This existential threat continued into the early years of the 20th century for the new University College Galway. However, thanks in great measure to the work of the then Registrar, the remarkable Mons. John Hynes, the Government agreed that the University should continue and best serve the country by supporting the Irish language, an objective enshrined in the University College Galway Act 1929.

## Monsignor John Hynes

Born in Newbridge, Co. Galway, in 1875, John Hynes was educated at Summerhill College, Sligo, and at Maynooth, where he was ordained priest in 1898. He served as a curate in Co. Sligo and on the staff of Summerhill College before joining University College Galway as Dean of Residence. In 1913 he was made a member of the Governing Body of the University and in the following year became Secretary to the that body. Three years later he was made a part-time lecturer in Celtic Archaeology and the discipline appears as a subject within the Faculty of Celtic Studies. In 1924 he was appointed to the newly created Chair of Celtic Archaeology and at the same time became Registrar.

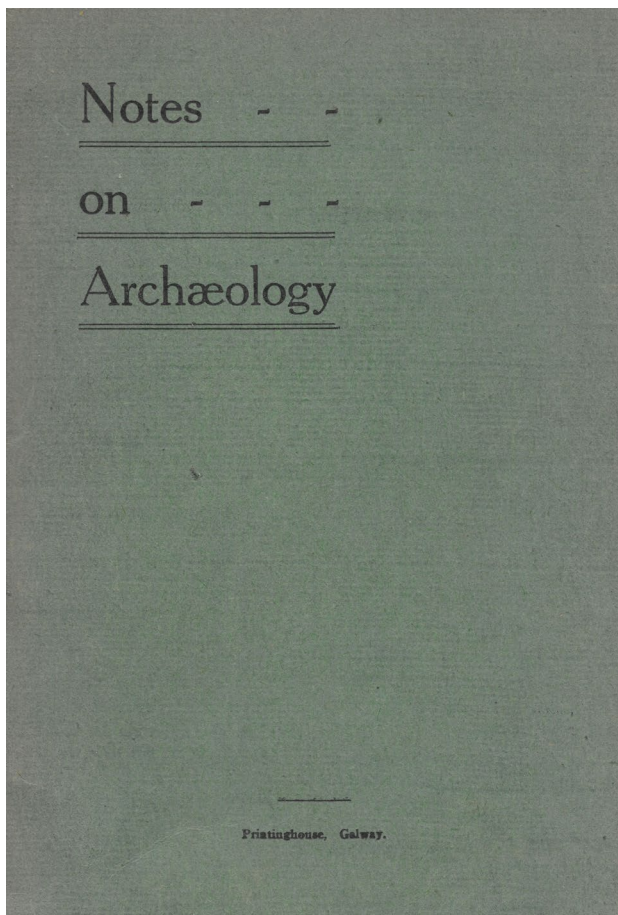


Mons. John Hynes by Seán Keating c. 1945.



In 1934 he became President of the College and sometime later, in appreciation of his administrative work in that capacity, the National University of Ireland conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D. Immensely popular, on his appointment as President he was carried shoulder-high by the students in a torchlight procession from the Railway Station to the College. Following this, when the student body was very small in numbers, he organized a dinner in his dining room for every student followed by a dance in the Aula Maxima.

He was deeply interested in local history and archaeology and did much to encourage interest in these subjects. His parents were native Irish speakers and he had a genuine interest in the Irish language and in Celtic Studies. He was a member of the Royal Irish Academy and a long-standing member of the committee of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society. He published several articles in that Society's *Journal*, including one on Lynch's Castle. He also wrote an account of the life of St Caillín (linked to Fenagh, Co. Leitrim, and Ballyconneely, Co. Galway) in *the Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*.



*Notes on Archaeology* by Mons. John Hynes c. 1930.

Even though student numbers were very small in University College Galway in the 1930s and 1940s he published a slim volume for undergraduate use entitled *Notes on Archaeology* c. 1930. This was a wide-ranging survey covering the Ice Age, stone implements, ancient forts, the Bronze and Iron Ages, the ancient Celts, the races of Europe and the early Christian period in Ireland. He retired in 1945 and died in 1949.

## Michael Duignan

Michael Duignan was Professor of Celtic Archaeology in University College Galway from 1945 to his retirement in 1977. Born in Castlebar, Co. Mayo, in 1907 he was educated at C.B.S. in Dublin, Rockwell College and University College Dublin. In U.C.D. he studied archaeology and early Irish history, and engaged in postgraduate studies under Eoin MacNeill. From 1931 to 1933 he studied archaeology and early Irish language and literature in the Universities of Munich and Bonn and was then appointed to assist the eminent Celtic scholar Rudolf Thurneysen in the preparation of a revised version of his *Handbuch des Alt-Irischen*—a seminal work in Celtic Studies still in use today as *A Grammar of Old Irish*.



Michael Duignan

Early work in the archaeological field included assisting Seán P. Ó Ríordáin in the first excavation season at Cush, Co. Limerick, and T.D. Kendrick at Gallen Priory, Co. Offaly. In 1935 he excavated the remains of a Bronze Age cemetery at Lug, Co. Offaly,



Michael Duignan as Dean of the Faculty of Arts with a student in the 1960s—a time when Deans were accessible to staff and students.

and undertook the preliminary reconnaissance of many of the bog-sites studied by Knud Jessen, a pioneer in pollen analysis. Two years later he was appointed Assistant Librarian (in charge of the manuscript collections) in the National Library of Ireland. In 1939, at the insistence of Adolf Mahr, he joined the National Museum of Ireland in the Antiquities Division. There, his duties included responsibility for the National Museum Folklife collection and, in 1944, the excavation of part of the early monastic site at Peakaun, Co. Tipperary. He was elected to membership of the Royal Irish Academy in 1942.

In University College Galway he introduced the new archaeology of post-war Europe to classes which to today's eyes seem to have been remarkably small. At that time and for over two decades to come, just the one teacher had to attempt to cover all of Irish archaeology up to early medieval times as well as aspects of the archaeology of Africa where the human story began, the Near East where farming originated, plus Continental Europe and Britain. In 1945-46 there were three First Year and four other students of Archaeology.

In 1952 Peter McCaffrey gained the first Master of Arts degree in Archaeology for his thesis *A Contribution to the Archaeology of the Barony of Dunkellin, Co. Galway*—an archaeological survey of some 600 monuments in a large area of south-east Galway.

Three years later he published an account of some Iron Age burial mounds he had recorded in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*. This was followed in 1956 by a study of some stone-built hut circles—one of which, in Ballylin south of Craughwell, had been excavated over twenty years before by Mons. John Hynes and Adolf Mahr. Another distinguished graduate at this time was Breandán Ó Ríordáin who would become Director of the National Museum of Ireland.

The undergraduate curriculum was quite extensive: First Year students learnt the scope and methods of archaeology, early hominids, the hunting and food gathering societies of Stone Age Europe and the spread of agriculture in Europe. In Second Year they studied the Neolithic and Bronze Age cultures of Europe with



A small Iron Age burial mound at Grannagh, Co. Galway, identified by Peter McCaffrey.



special reference to Britain and Ireland while Third Year addressed the European Iron Age with a focus on the Celtic peoples and on Irish archaeology to 1200 AD. Appropriate parts of the courses in Second and Third Year were a minor component in the BA Degree in Celtic Studies.

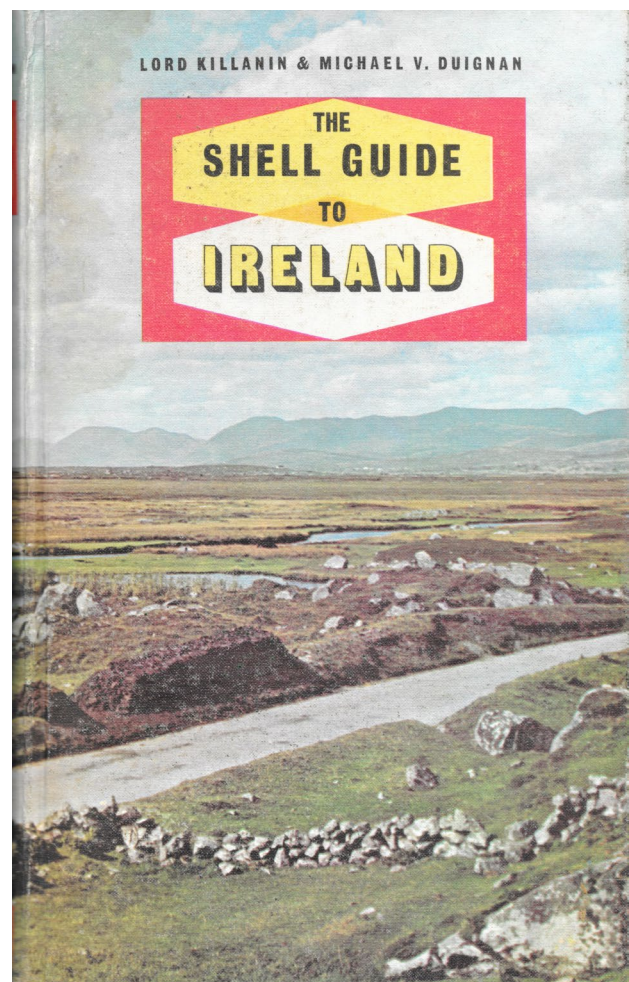


Michael Duignan as Registrar in 1973 on the occasion of the conferring of the honorary degree of Doctor in Celtic Literature on the eminent Celtic scholar Daniel Binchy (left) by the National University of Ireland.

In 1977, when Michael Duignan retired, the total number of full-time students was over one hundred with over sixty evening students. To a great extent, of course, these numerical increases reflected the expansion of University College Galway as a whole, from seven hundred students in 1945 to about four thousand just over thirty years later. He was one of a group who contributed significantly to this development; active in University affairs he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts (1965-70), Registrar and Deputy President (1970-74).

In the years 1953 to 1955 Duignan was Visiting Professor at the University of Uppsala and in 1967 he was made a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute. He served as President of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society. He retired to Dublin in 1977 where he died in 1988. In 1980 many of his former students, colleagues and friends participated in a seminar on the theme 'Ireland 800 BC to 800 AD' in his honour in Belfast. The papers of the seminar and some other contributions were published as a *Festschrift* in 1982: *Studies on Early Ireland, Essays in Honour of M.V. Duignan*, edited by Brian Scott.

Among his more noteworthy publications were studies on early Irish agriculture and on the Turoe Stone along with two editions of the celebrated *Shell Guide to*



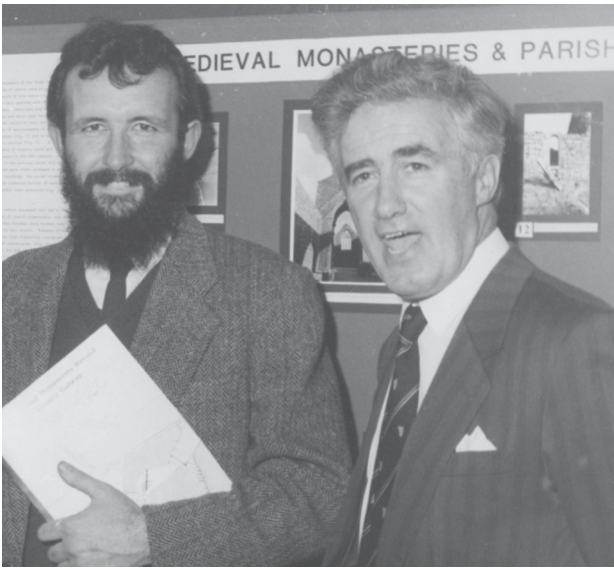
The first edition of the celebrated *Shell Guide to Ireland* appeared in 1962. At over 500 pages with numerous illustrations it was acclaimed for its scholarly content, its wealth of information and its occasional critical or querulous comment.

*Ireland* (with Lord Killanin) in which the 1960s Galway cathedral, on the site of the old County Gaol, is politely described as 'a sad disappointment'. His interests lay mainly in the early medieval period and in the late 1940s he undertook excavations at an important ringfort at Rathgurreen and in the early 1950s at the early monastic site of Kiltiernan both near Kilcolgan, Co. Galway.

These were published posthumously in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* (by Michelle Comber) and in the *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* (by John Waddell and Miriam Clyne) respectively. A modest increase in academic staff numbers in his time was a very significant development. Etienne Rynne came to Galway as the first lecturer in Archaeology in the Department in 1967 and John Waddell was appointed junior lecturer in European prehistory in 1970.

## Etienne Rynne

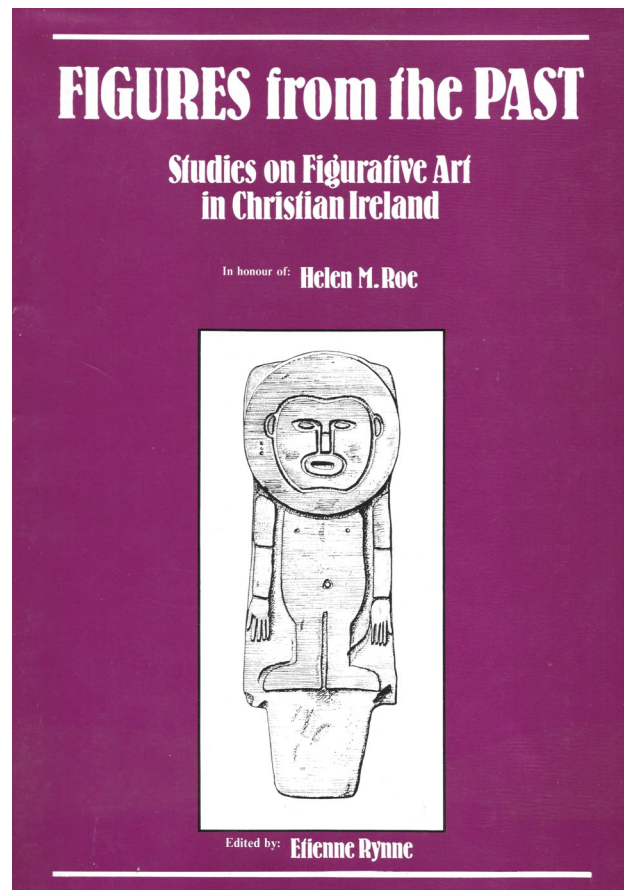
Etienne Rynne succeeded Michael Duignan as Professor of Archaeology in 1978. Born in 1932 he gained a BA and an MA in archaeology in University College Dublin. He joined the Irish Antiquities Division of the National Museum of Ireland in 1957. He was President of the Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, of the Cambrian Archaeological Society in Wales, and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He was President of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society and also the editor for some thirty years of a regional archaeological journal, *The North Munster Antiquarian Journal*.



Etienne Rynne with Paul Gosling (left) at the launch of the University College Galway and Office of Public Works joint Archaeological Survey of County Galway in October 1987.

He published widely in both scholarly and local journals. His more important studies included papers on 'Celtic Stone Idols in Ireland' and 'The La Tène and Roman Finds from Lambay, County Dublin'. He published a booklet on *Athenry: a medieval Irish town* and edited *North Munster Studies*, a volume of essays in memory of Mons. Michael Moloney, and another collection of studies in *Figures from the Past* in honour of Helen M. Roe, a distinguished scholar in medieval Irish art. He retired in 1998 and died in 2012.

The importance of the link between Archaeology and Celtic Studies was evident when the sixth International Congress of Celtic Studies was held in Galway in July 1979. Etienne Rynne offered a paper on 'A Celtic origin for Sheela-na-Gigs' and led an excursion to south Clare that included the early monastic site of Inis Cealtra on Lough Derg and the O'Brien inauguration site at Magh Adhair near Quin. Michael Duignan guided a party to



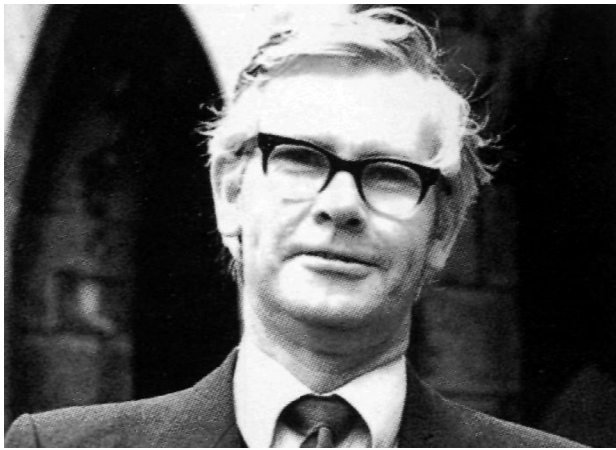
Etienne Rynne's *Figures from the Past* was published in 1987 by the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. The cover image is a carved figure on one face of a cross slab from Carrowntemple, Co. Sligo.

the royal site of Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon. Eminent archaeological participants included Stuart Piggott who had just retired as Professor of Archaeology in Edinburgh, Professor Leslie Alcock of the University of Glasgow and Paul-Marie Duval of l'École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris.

It was Etienne Rynne who initiated a significant development in the neglected area of medieval archaeology when, in 1980, Thomas Fanning was appointed as lecturer in the archaeology of the Viking and medieval periods. This was the first academic post in this field in the National University of Ireland. He had extensive knowledge of medieval archaeology and excavation experience in the National Monuments section of the Office of Public Works. He completed a PhD thesis on *The Ringed Pins of Viking Europe* in Galway in 1988. A few years later the appointment of William O'Brien, with expertise in prehistoric archaeology, would bring academic staff numbers to four.

Another important event was the commencement of the Office of Public Work's Archaeological Survey of County Galway in 1987. This was a collaborative





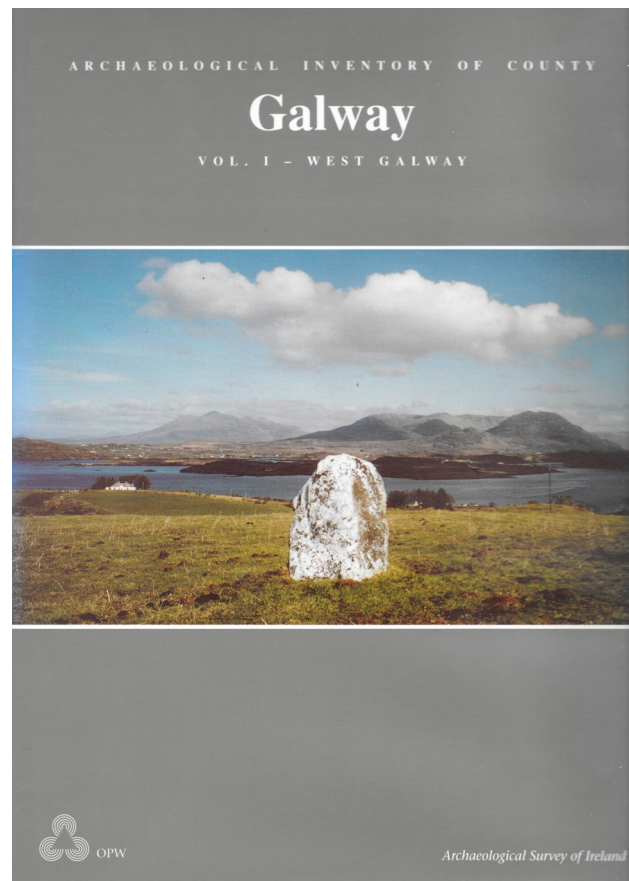
Thomas Fanning (1933-1993)

undertaking with the Department of Archaeology in University College Galway and represented the first detailed survey, under the direction of Paul Gosling, of all archaeological sites and monuments in the county. It was a major enterprise for judging from those marked on the various editions of the Ordnance Survey maps for the county over 7000 sites awaited proper recording.

The first of two volumes was published in 1993 and documented the known pre-1700 AD monuments in west Galway including the Aran Islands. Some thirty-eight megalithic tombs were recorded, the majority in north Connemara, along with twenty-one castles, numerous burial mounds, ancient field systems, over one hundred holy wells and much else. As well as being an important piece of research, this survey and many others like it were immensely important contributions to local community heritage studies.

Many Galway graduates participated in this fieldwork, among them Michael Gibbons, well known for his work in Connemara in particular. They also included Markus Casey who was a skilled pilot and aerial photographer. He completed an MA thesis on *The Coastal Promontory Forts of Ireland. A survey of counties Sligo, Mayo, Galway and Clare* in 1999 and published the results of a small excavation of one example at Doonamo, Aughernacalligh, Co. Mayo, in the same year. Sadly he died in a plane crash in 2008. Another contribution to the survey was the work on medieval Galway by Paul Walsh whose MA thesis in 1981 was entitled *Fortifications at Galway, 12th-19th Centuries: an archaeological and historical study*. He would publish extensively on medieval Galway and become a senior archaeologist in the National Monuments service.

Of course there was a lot of other postgraduate work as well: Jim Higgins, now Galway City's Heritage Officer,

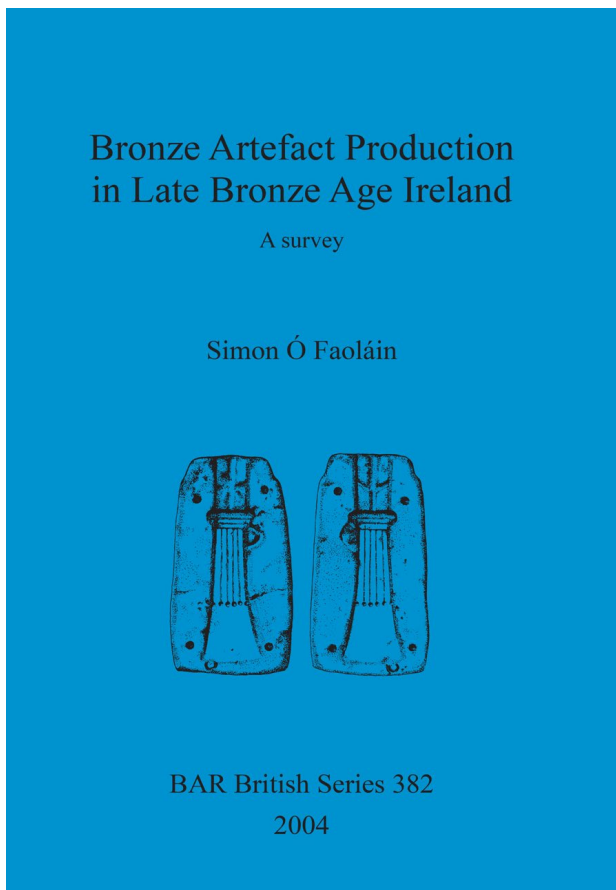


Volume 1 of the *Archaeological Inventory of County Galway* published in 1993. The cover image shows a prehistoric standing stone at Garraunbaun overlooking Ballynakill Bay in north Connemara.

was awarded an MA in 1983 for a thesis on *The Early Christian Cross-slabs, Pillar Stones, and Related Monuments of County Galway*, published in 1987. He gained a PhD in 2010 on *The Medieval and Late Medieval Funerary Sculpture of Galway City 12th-17th Centuries*.

Patrick Wallace completed a PhD thesis on the subject of *Excavated Building Remains in Dublin 900-1300—origins, content and context* in 1985. He would in time become Director of the National Museum of Ireland. Other graduate students who were encouraged to publish significant research included Simon Ó Faoláin. He expanded his 1997 MA thesis *A Survey of Bronze Artefact Production in Late Bronze Age Ireland* to produce a major study of bronze metal working in this period. His monograph *Bronze Artefact Production in Late Bronze Age Ireland* was published in 2004.

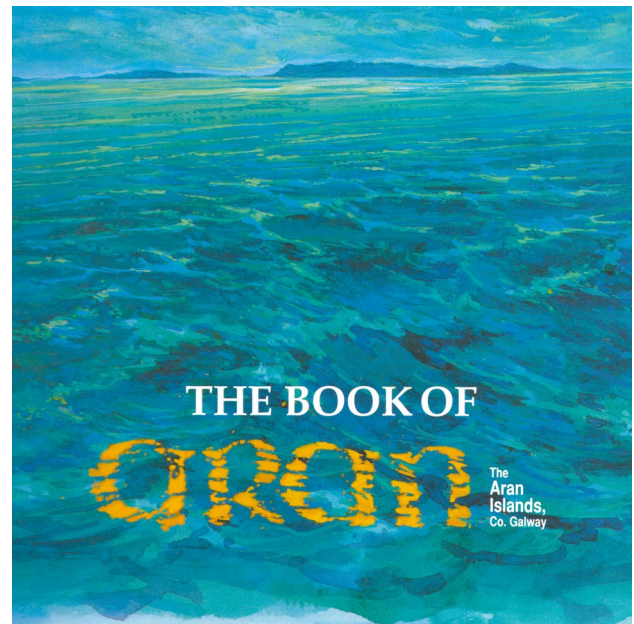
John Sheehan, now a lecturer in University College Cork, did an MA thesis on *Viking-Age Silver Arms-Rings from Ireland* in 1984. and Patrick Holland, whose MA thesis in 1987 was on *The Anglo-Normans in County Galway: an Archaeological and Historical Study*, would become a museum curator in Tipperary. Robert Chapple



Simon Ó Faoláin's *Bronze Artefact Production in Late Bronze Age Ireland* was published in 2004. The cover illustration is a drawing of a two-part stone mould for casting a bronze axehead found in a bog at Ballydaw, Co. Kilkenny.

who worked for a time with Northern Archaeological Consultancy in Belfast had completed his MA in 1998 on *A Statistical Analysis of Ringfort Distribution and Morphology of the Loop Head Peninsula, Co. Clare*. In a pioneering exercise he supplied the Department of Archaeology with its own dedicated web page advertising its activities. This innovation was in time supplanted by a new University-wide system.

In 1974 Aidan Walsh would become the first curator of Monaghan County Museum, one of the first local museums of its kind in the Republic and a museum that would win a Council of Europe Prize for excellence in 1980. He excavated a portion of the western extremity of the celebrated complex of linear earthworks known as the Black Pig's Dyke. Active in national and international museum affairs, he has also served as Director of the Northern Ireland Museums Council. Eamon Cody, another graduate, would amongst other work in the National Monuments Service produce the monumental Co. Donegal volume in the *Survey of the Megalithic Tombs of Ireland*, the largest and the last in the series. His MA thesis in 1989 was *An Archaeological Survey of the Barony of Athenry, Co. Galway*.



Survey work by students of archaeology over a number of years contributed to a lengthy account of the archaeology of the Aran Islands by John Waddell in *The Book of Aran* published in 1994.

As far as the Aran Islands were concerned, the Galway survey was able to utilize some of the results of fieldwork undertaken there by other students of archaeology from the University. For a number of years in the 1970s John Waddell organized undergraduate fieldwork classes on the three islands with some limited financial support from the Department. Over time most of the numerous monuments were recorded and some of the results were published in the *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* and in a chapter in *The Book of Aran* edited by John Waddell, J.W. O'Connell and Anne Korff in 1994.

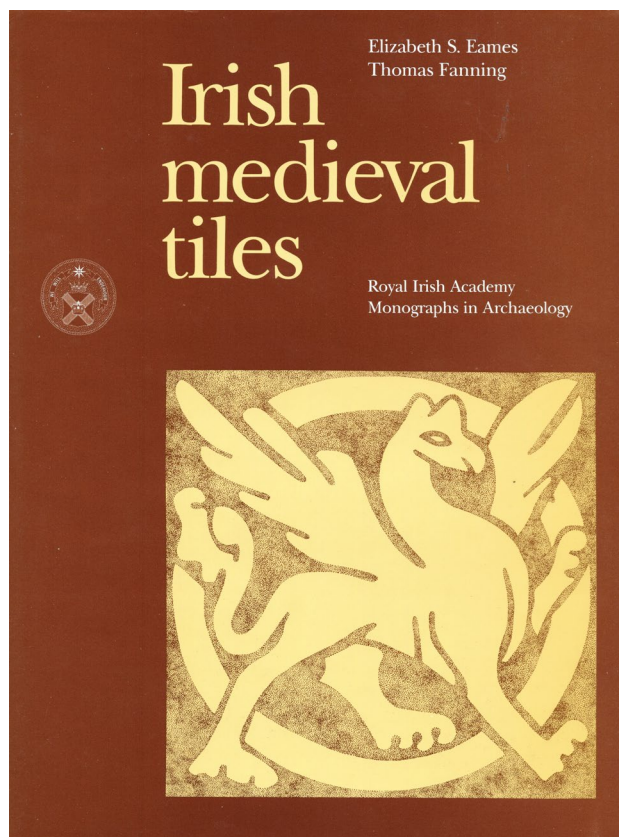
The importance of large-scale regional archaeological surveys had been amply demonstrated some years before when local initiatives in Co. Donegal and in Corca Dhuibhne (the Dingle Peninsula) in Co. Kerry published ground-breaking studies of their local archaeological heritage. Born of frustration with the slow pace of the Office of Public Works national programme, these major fieldwork undertakings, in which Thomas Fanning had an important role, recorded many thousands of monuments and published the results in two substantial volumes in 1983 and 1986 respectively.

With the aim of providing practical training in survey and excavation for some students of archaeology Fanning also directed several short seasons of excavation at a small medieval settlement at Rinnaraw, near Portnablagh, in Co. Donegal, from 1987 to 1992.



His death in 1993 meant that the results of this work were only published in 2006 (by Michelle Comber). He did publish the excavations he had conducted when employed by the National Monuments Service at Clontuskert Priory, Co. Galway, and at the early Christian site at Reask, near Ballyferriter, Co. Kerry. Some of his doctoral research on Viking pins appeared as a monograph entitled *Viking Age Ringed Pins from Dublin* as a part of the series on the excavations of medieval Dublin carried out by the National Museum of Ireland in the years 1962-81 and published by the Royal Irish Academy.

His pioneering study of Anglo-Norman decorative floor tiles in Ireland, undertaken with Elizabeth Eames, formerly of the British Museum, was also published by the Royal Irish Academy in 1988. This publication offers an interesting illustration of some of the challenges presented by archaeological research and publication. In addition to several distribution maps it contained over 480 original drawings of individual decorated tiles and tile fragments.



The cover image of Elizabeth Eames and Thomas Fanning's *Irish Medieval Tiles* is a colourful tile from the Cistercian abbey at Mellifont, Co. Kildare, depicting a mythical winged griffin and probably dating to the 13th century.



Angela Gallagher

With funding from various sources, including University College Galway, most of these illustrations were prepared by Angela Gallagher. An archaeology graduate of University College Galway, she was a skilled archaeological draughtsperson whose training had included a course of study in the Institute of Archaeology, University of London. She had expertise in digital illustration and was appointed to the Technical Staff of the University, as Artist-Draughtsperson in the Department of Archaeology, in 1987. This was a significant development as far as the research capacity of the Department was concerned for almost all archaeological publications demand illustrations of one sort or another, be they maps, plans or artefact drawings. She retired in 2021 and her contribution over many years to the publications of staff and to fieldwork exercises has been immense.

The appointment of William O'Brien as a lecturer in prehistoric archaeology in 1990 was also an important development, increasing considerably the Department's expertise in early prehistory and particularly in the novel field of early mining and metallurgy. A graduate of University College Cork, he had completed his PhD there in 1987 on *Primitive Copper Mining in South-west Ireland*. This work had included excavation at Mount Gabriel, near Schull in west Cork, the results of which were published in a major monograph by Galway University Press. Entitled *Mount Gabriel: Bronze Age Mining in Ireland*, this 371-page study, the first major



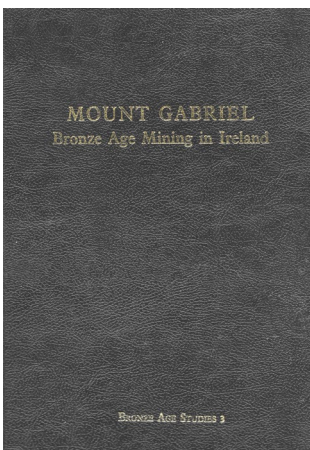


William O'Brien

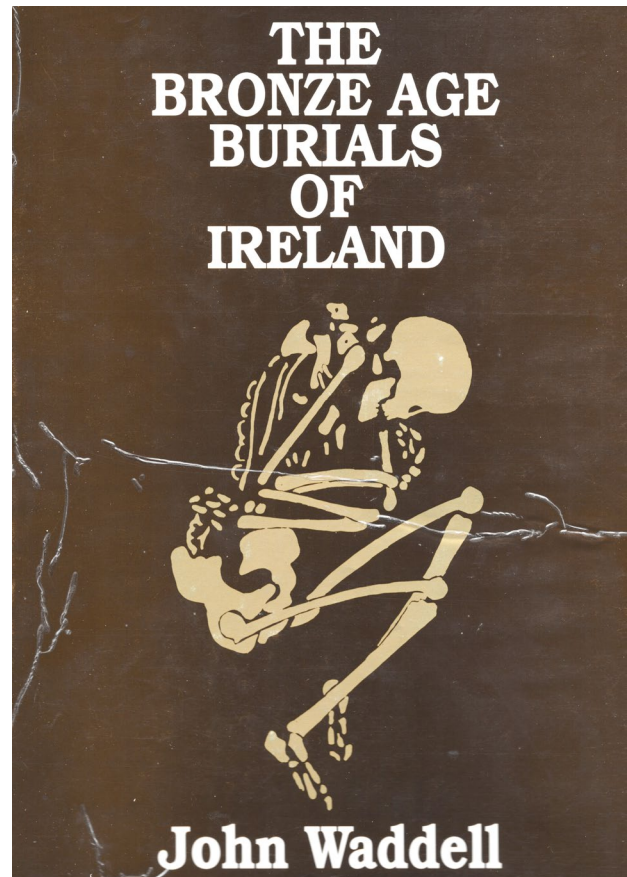
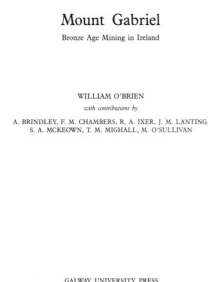
work on the subject, attracted international attention for the archaeology of early mining was an expanding area of investigation both in Britain and in Continental Europe.

Labelled as 'Bronze Age Studies 3' *Mount Gabriel* was in fact the third book in a series on this period of prehistory to be published by the Department of Archaeology at this time. The first was *The Bronze Age Burials of Ireland* by John Waddell in 1990. This was a study of over one hundred prehistoric graves and their contents. It too was published by Galway University Press. It was followed by *The Funerary Bowls and Vases of the Irish Bronze Age* by Breandán Ó Ríordáin and John Waddell in 1993. This was an illustrated corpus of over 600 decorated prehistoric pottery vessels published by the University Press for the National Museum of Ireland.

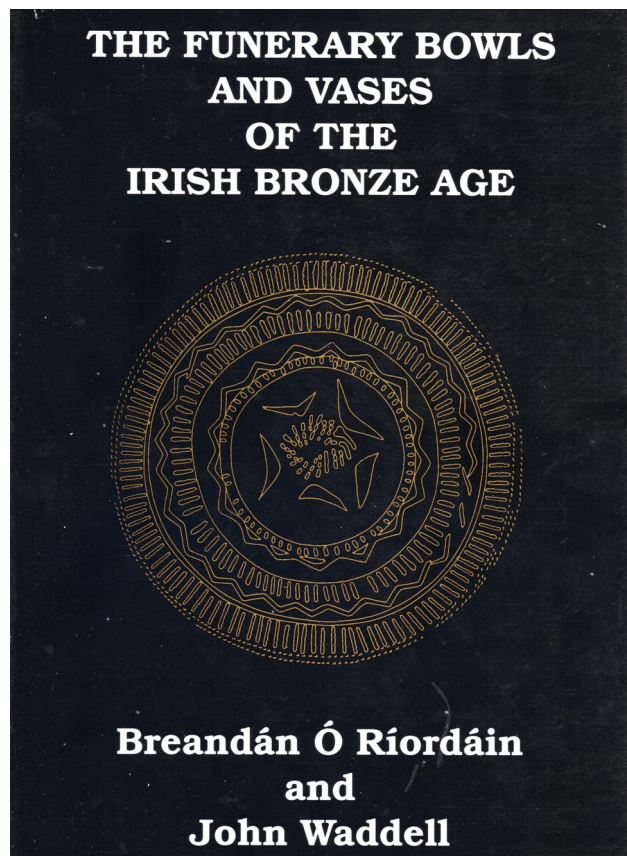
Sadly, due to lack of support from the University, Galway University Press did not survive.



*Mount Gabriel: Bronze Age Mining in Ireland* by William O'Brien and published by Galway University Press in the Department of Archaeology's 'Bronze Age Studies' series.

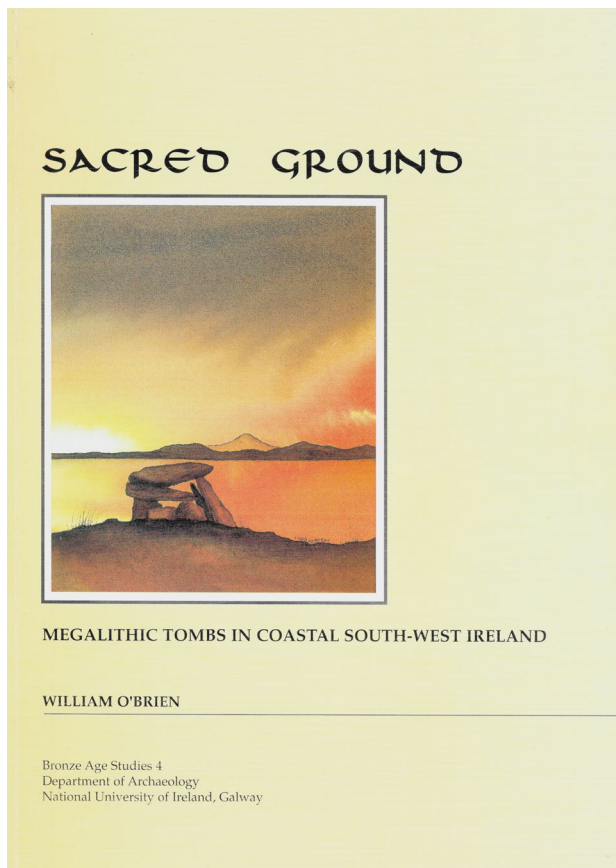


*The Bronze Age Burials of Ireland* by John Waddell. The cover image is a representation of a skeleton in a crouched or foetal position, a common burial posture in the early Bronze Age.



*The Funerary Bowls and Vases of the Irish Bronze Age* by Breandán Ó Ríordáin and John Waddell. The cover image is based on an impressed design on the base of a pottery bowl found in a grave at Grange, Co. Roscommon.

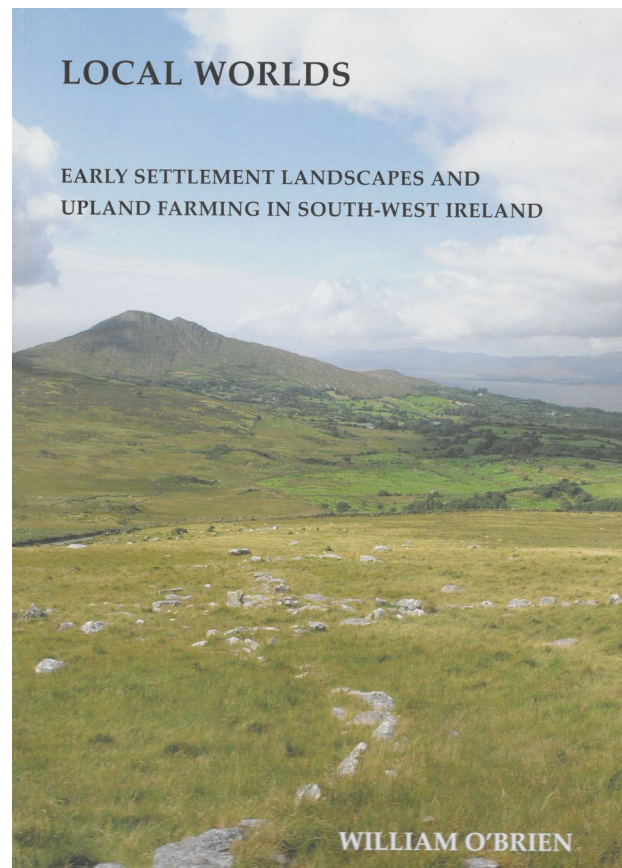




*Sacred Ground. Megalithic Tombs in Coastal South-west Ireland* by William O'Brien. The cover painting by Linda Keohane depicts a megalithic tomb at Altar, near Schull, Co. Cork, aligned on Mizen Peak.

The fourth volume in the Bronze Age Studies series was published in 1999 by the Department of Archaeology with the expert assistance of Clódóirí Lurgan in Indreabhán. This was *Sacred Ground. Megalithic Tombs in Coastal South-west Ireland* by William O'Brien, an account of the excavation of two prehistoric tombs near Schull undertaken when he was in University College Cork. Needless to say the drawing skills of Angela Gallagher were an important contribution to the illustrations in all these publications.

In 2001 O'Brien launched a research project to investigate early settlement and hill farming on the Beara peninsula in west Cork and south Kerry. This



William O'Brien's *Local Worlds*. The cover illustration shows ancient field walls at Drombohilly Lower, Beara, Co. Kerry.

involved intensive fieldwork, survey, historical research and archaeological excavation at fourteen locations. Many ancient field systems were recorded and a range of sites dating from around 1500 BC to 1200 AD were identified. It is the most extensive study of ancient upland settlement ever undertaken in the country. Funded by the 'Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions' (PRTL I 2) with financial support from Government and from the Atlantic Philanthropies foundation, it was attached to the University's Centre for Human Settlement and Historical Change—later the Moore Institute. The results were published in 2009 in a major monograph entitled *Local Worlds. Early Settlement Landscapes and Upland Farming in South-west Ireland*.

## John Waddell

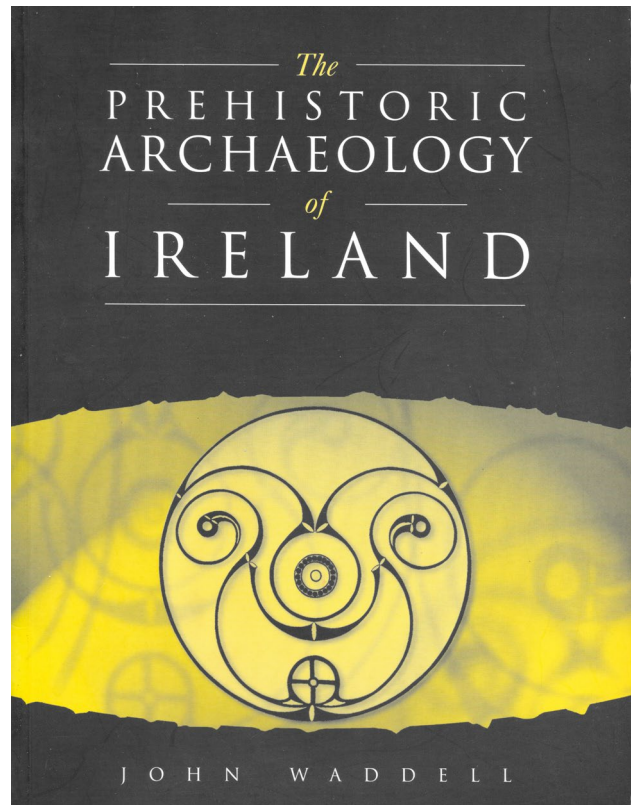
On the retirement of Etienne Rynne, John Waddell was appointed the fourth Professor of Archaeology in 1998. A graduate of University College Galway, his MA was entitled *A Contribution to the Study of the Urns and Urn Burials of the Irish Bronze Age* and was followed by a PhD on *Aspects of Funerary Practice in the Insular Bronze Age*. On graduation he gained a permanent position on the staff of the National Museum of Ireland in 1967-1969 but resigned to avail of a two-year Advanced Study Scholarship in the University of Glasgow where further research was undertaken on various aspects of early prehistory.

In 1970 on the recommendation of Professor Christopher Hawkes, University of Oxford, he was awarded a grant from the British Institute in Paris to enable a three-month study tour of some of the archaeological monuments and major museum collections in northern and western France, including material in the Musée des antiquités nationales, Saint Germain-en-Laye. This research was primarily an assessment of the evidence for Irish and French contact in prehistory and resulted in several publications. The same year saw his appointment as a junior lecturer in European prehistory in Galway.

In 1973 he acted as co-director of a major series of excavations of Bronze Age burial mounds in the Brenig Valley, near Denbigh, North Wales. In the 1980s he variously served as Chairman of the Irish Association of Professional Archaeologists and of the Royal Irish Academy's National Committee for Archaeology. In 1991 he was appointed by Charles Haughey to the management committee of the new archaeological research body known as the Discovery Programme. From 1995-2000 he was a member of the Heritage Council and Chairman of its Archaeology Committee.



John Waddell



The first edition of *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Ireland* was published by Galway University Press in 1998. The cover image is a stylized solar symbol taken from an Iron Age object in the National Museum of Ireland that depicts the sun in a solar boat with bird's head prow and stern.

He has served as extern examiner in the Universities of Manchester, Exeter and Oxford and is a member of the Royal Irish Academy.

In the early 1980s John Waddell began a programme of research on the royal site of Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon, which included fieldwork, aerial photographic survey and excavation. Both field survey and excavation provided training for a number of archaeology undergraduates and postgraduates. Excavation at one burial monument was funded by the Office of Public Works on the recommendation of the National Committee for Archaeology. The results were published in a series of articles and formed the basis for a second major research programme there which began in 1994. In 1997-1998 at the invitation of the National Monuments Service he undertook two seasons of excavation, with Madeline O'Brien as co-director, of a linear earthwork at Teltown, Co. Meath.

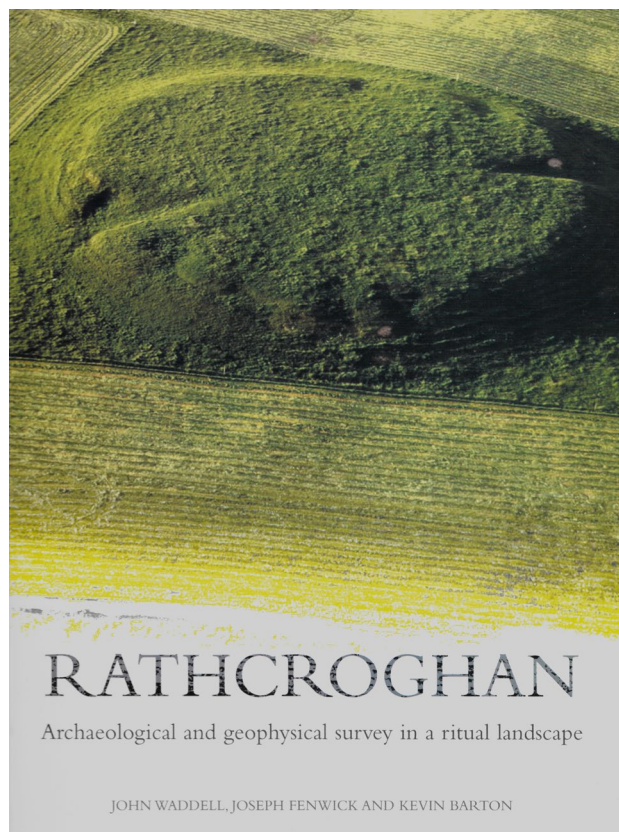
Interest in the question of the relationships between Ireland and both Continental Europe and Britain in prehistory prompted several papers on topics such the Celticization of Ireland and the significance of the Irish



Sea in prehistory. The archaeological evidence for some eight thousand years of prehistoric contact between Ireland and Britain was one of the central themes of a book entitled *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Ireland* published in 1998. One of the last titles to be produced by Galway University Press, it has been revised several times and, in the hands of another publisher, has become the standard text on Irish prehistory.

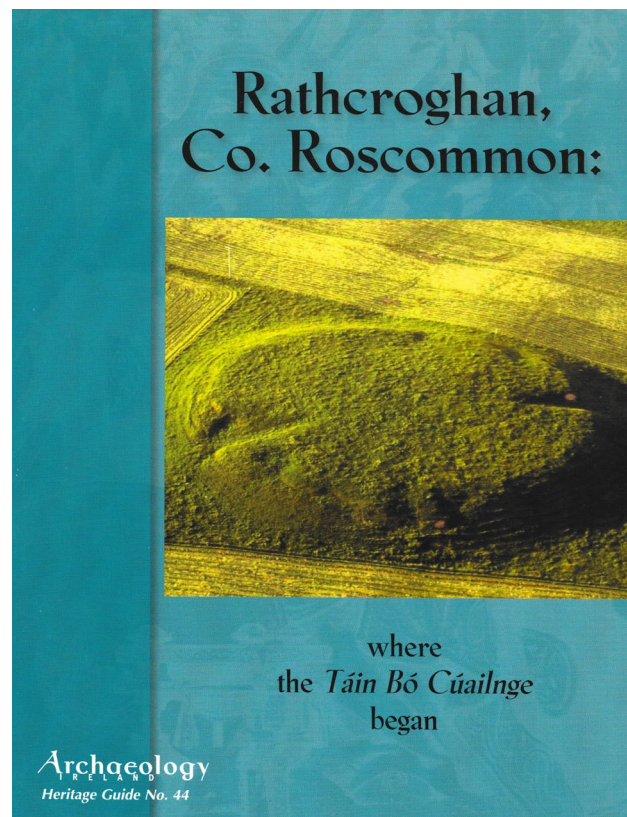
In 1994 he initiated the 'Archaeo-Geophysical Imaging Project' at the royal site of Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon, in collaboration with Joe Fenwick and with Kevin Barton, of the University's Applied Geophysics Unit. With significant funding from the Heritage Council, a range of non-invasive geophysical techniques were applied to a series of monuments with results that proved to be of great archaeological interest. They demonstrated in particular that the huge central mound in the complex, Rathcroghan Mound, was a monument of exceptional complexity. In ancient times, presumably in the Iron Age, two stone enclosures were entombed within it and several wooden structures built on its summit.

Collaboration with local landowners encouraged community interest in the rich archaeological heritage of this part of Roscommon. Indeed engagement with local



The final report of a major programme of survey at Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon, was published in 2009. The great earthen mound, the focal monument in the complex, is depicted on the cover.

communities has been a constant aspect of the work of the Department of Archaeology. Thus in 2009 the work at Rathcroghan figured in a colourful 5-page guide to the complex of monuments published in *Archaeology Ireland's* Heritage Guide series.

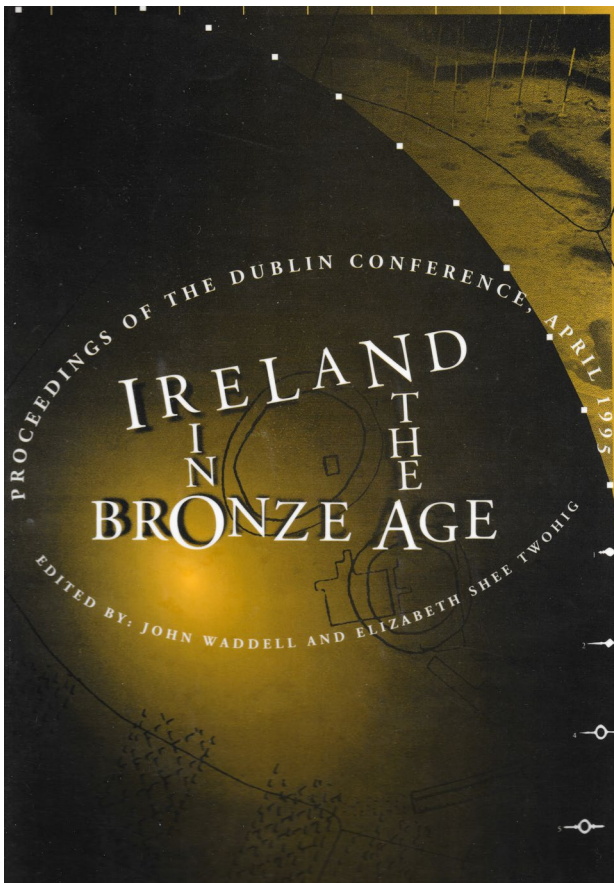


An *Archaeology Ireland* Heritage Guide: *Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon where the Táin Bó Cúailnge began* by John Waddell. Rathcroghan Mound is illustrated.

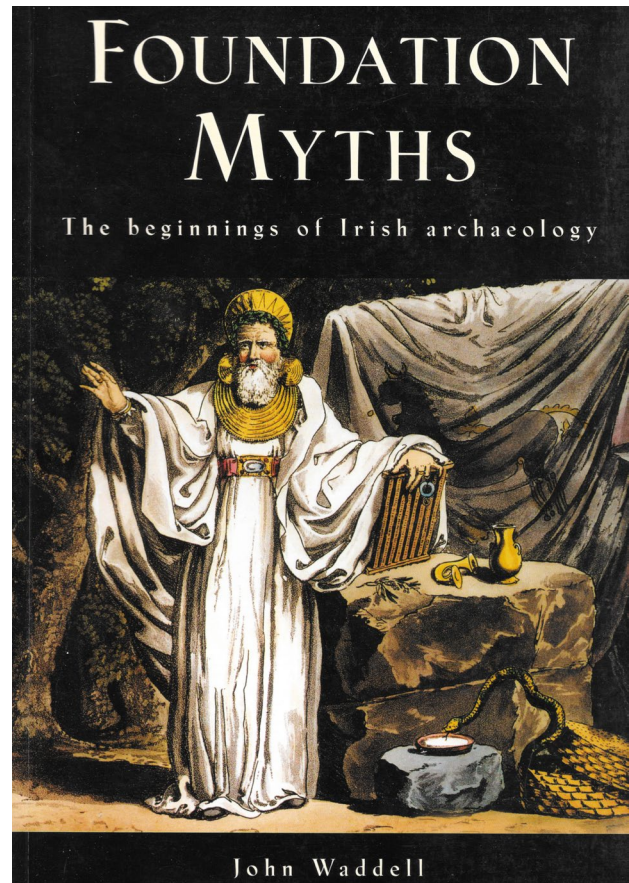
As a part of a Council of Europe initiative in 1995 Ireland participated in a European archaeological promotion on the theme of 'The Bronze Age: the First Golden Age in Europe'. One of the Irish events was a major international conference on this period of prehistory held in Dublin Castle. John Waddell, as a member of the organizing committee, was the principal editor of the conference proceedings published in the same year and entitled *Ireland in the Bronze Age*.

In 2005 he published the first history of the development of the study of Irish archaeology from medieval times to the later 20th century. This demonstrated that while political and religious divisions were significant, it was evident that early Irish literature and ancient origin myths in particular had an important role to play, as reflected in the title *Foundation Myths*. A revised edition of *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Ireland* appeared in 2010. He retired in 2010 and the Professorship was speedily filled with the appointment of Charlotte Damm.





*Ireland in the Bronze Age. Proceedings of the Dublin Conference, April 1995.*



*Foundation Myths. The beginnings of Irish archaeology* was published in 2005. The cover illustration is a fanciful early 19th century illustration of a Druid bedecked with various archaeological items including a gold lunula upside-down on his head.

## Charlotte Damm

Charlotte Damm, from Ikast, Denmark, had studied archaeology at the University of Aarhus and obtained a PhD at the University of Cambridge. Her 1991 thesis was entitled *Continuity and change: an analysis of social and material patterns in the Danish Neolithic*. She was a professor at the Department of Archaeology and Social Anthropology in the University of Tromsø from 2002 and was appointed Professor of Archaeology in the National University of Ireland, Galway, in the period 2011–13.

While in Galway her publications included 'With the swamp as cold. Understanding sacrifice and ritual bonded archaeology', *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 44 (2011) and 'Approaching a complex past: entangled collective identities', in *Local Societies in Bronze Age Northern Europe* (2012). She resigned for personal reasons in 2013 and is now Professor of Archaeology in the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø.



Charlotte Damm



The Established Professorship of Archaeology in Galway has remained vacant ever since.

Describing some of the activities of a long sequence of such Professors of Archaeology is one way of emphasizing the continuity in teaching and research that inevitably provides an academic community with some sense of purpose and achievement. However it only offers a very partial picture of a major collective endeavour and the exceptionally wide range of teaching and research activity in an innovative and committed department. The later 1990s and the early years of the new millennium would see significant developments in staffing structure, research and curriculum development.

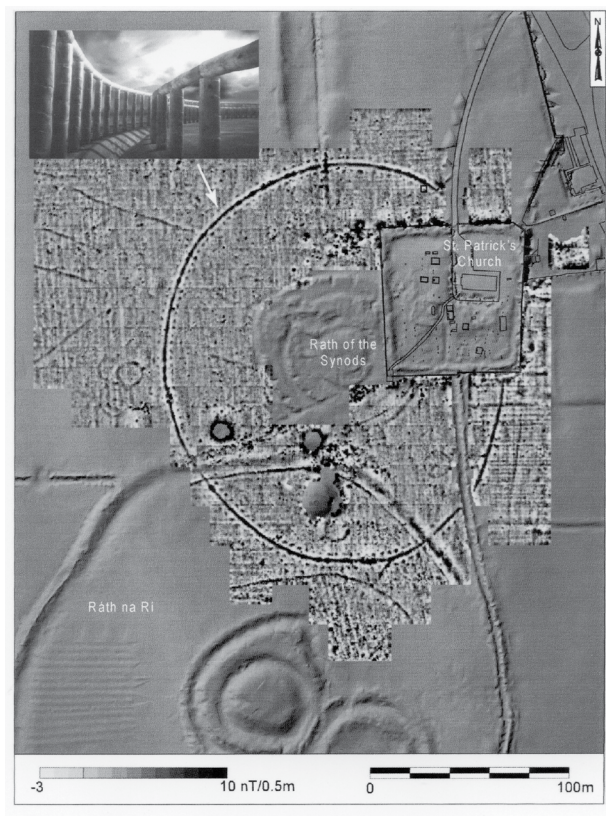
Conor Newman, a graduate of University College Dublin, joined the Department as lecturer having completed an acclaimed survey of the Hill of Tara on behalf of the Discovery Programme. This work, a combination of topographical, aerial and non-invasive geophysical survey, was the most detailed study of a major archaeological site ever undertaken in Ireland.



Conor Newman

His research interests include early medieval decorative art and iconography, landscape and heritage studies. He has a specialist interest in decorative metalwork of the 4th to 7th century and has published extensively on these subjects.

Further survey work on Tara in 1998 and 1999 in collaboration with Joe Fenwick and Galway graduates like Roseanne Schot and Ger Dowling (who completed an MA thesis on *A Landscape Study of the Prehistoric Archaeology of the Barony of Clare, North Galway* in 2001) produced some quite spectacular results. It revealed the presence of a hitherto unknown timber enclosure on the hilltop. This huge ceremonial structure was built of a great double ring of wooden posts and was several times larger than the famous stone circle at Stonehenge.



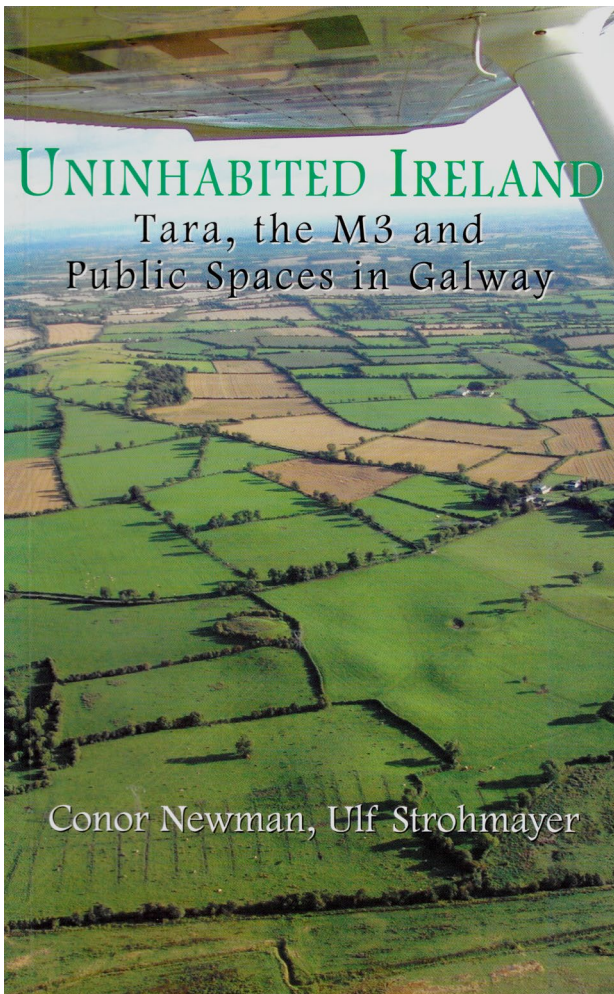
The great timber circle on the Hill of Tara revealed in geophysical survey with a tentative reconstruction shown on the upper left.

Joe Fenwick would document the excitement of this discovery in a chapter in his book *Lost and Found* in 2003. He had joined the technical staff in Archaeology as field officer in 2001; his expertise in geophysical and topographical survey had been a crucial component of the earlier work at Rathcroghan.

Another development in 1999 was of a very different nature. The route selection process began for a four-lane motorway that would cut through the Tara countryside. All of the proposed routes would have impacted negatively on the rich archaeology of this immensely important landscape. Given his unrivalled knowledge, Conor Newman became a key figure in a protracted controversy that attracted international attention. Faced with an intransigent Government that seemed to believe sustainable development meant sustaining development at all costs, some archaeologists studiously positioned themselves on neutral ground, but he and many others refused to accept a bad planning decision and an act of cultural vandalism. He has documented the whole unsavoury affair in several papers.

Archaeological studies in Galway extended beyond the prehistoric and medieval periods. In 1999 Charles Orser, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, Illinois State University, was appointed Adjunct Professor

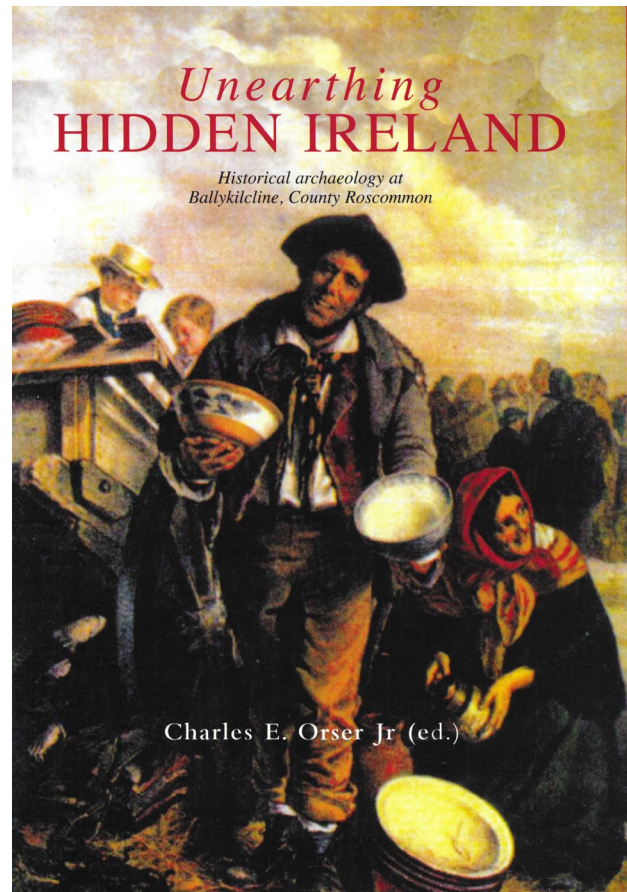




One of several accounts of the Tara controversy was published by Conor Newman in 2007. The cover illustrates a part of the Tara landscape. An earthwork called Rathmiles, just north of the Hill of Tara, is visible in the centre of the aerial photograph. The M3 now traverses the land at the bottom of the photograph.

in Archaeology for a number of years. He had an international reputation, known particularly for his books *Historical Archaeology* (with Brian Fagan) in 1995 and *A Historical Archaeology of the Modern World* in 1996. In the latter he charted a connection between communities as far apart as Brazil and Ireland each impacted by colonialism, capitalism and modernity. This volume was inspired by his work in Ireland where he had been conducting innovative research and excavation on the archaeology of some 19th century Famine period communities in Co. Roscommon for several years. He had also been contributing to the University's Irish Studies Summer School.

Historical archaeology, an area in which he had acknowledged expertise, had very few practitioners in Ireland at the time. In examining the material traces of recent societies that did have written records, it has the potential to provide a voice to those whose history is not



Charles Orser's *Unearthing Hidden Ireland*. The cover image is a painting of a 19th century ceramics pedlar.

preserved in documents. He was able to demonstrate that the tenants in Roscommon were not wholly lacking in comfort and style or sunk in poverty and gloom. They acquired locally made coarse earthen pottery and some English-made fine pottery probably bought from travelling pedlars.

He was also able to shed light on the eviction process there where the complete demolition of a tenant's cabin allowed the land to be returned to profitable pasture. His account of these excavations at Ballykilcline, on the Mahon estate, near Strokestown, was published as *Unearthing Hidden Ireland* in 2006. The Ballykilcline story was also presented as a case study in his *Race and Practice in Archaeological Interpretation* in 2004.

Maggie Ronayne joined the academic staff as lecturer in 1999. A graduate of University College Cork, she had studied at the University of Southampton. She taught there and at the University of Oxford and trained students in excavation methods in Scotland, Ireland and France. Having initially carried out research in prehistoric archaeology, her interests now lie in public archaeology and heritage, historical archaeology of the recent past, and community archaeology. She has a long-



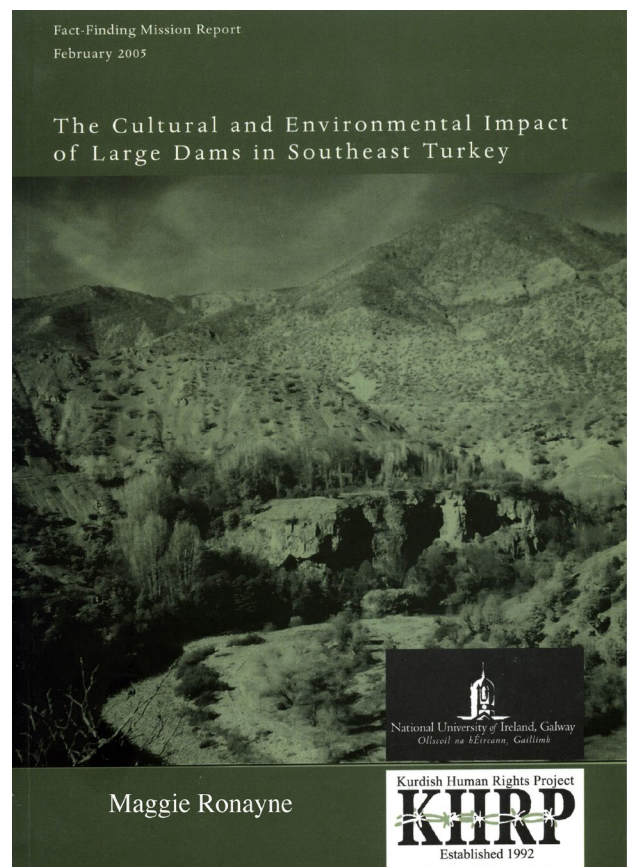
standing interest in the connections between heritage, communities and sustainability and, for example, was active in investigating the threat to communities, their environment and heritage in south-east Turkey where the flooding of river valleys and major dam construction projects threatened important sites like Hasankeyf on the River Tigris. It was eventually submerged by the Ilisu Dam project.



Maggie Ronayne

She has undertaken extensive public archaeology fieldwork in this region and the work set a number of international precedents, including in the field of heritage and human rights. This, and previous work from the 1990s, has also led her to address the related issues of the use of archaeology in the construction of collective identities, particularly colonialism and nationalism, as well as cultural destruction in war, occupation and conflict zones.

Her publications on the subject have included *The Ilisu Dam: Displacement of Communities and Destruction of Culture* in 2002 and *The Cultural and Environmental Impact of Large Dams in Southeast Turkey* in 2005 as well as several peer-reviewed articles in academic journals. Major construction projects are not the only threat to the archaeological heritage. In several studies she has examined the possible negative impact of heritage tourism on communities and culture—including the famous Boyne Valley. Working with Indigenous and grassroots women's organisations, she has emphasized the central role of women in creating and defending culture.



Maggie Ronayne's *The Cultural and Environmental Impact of Large Dams in Southeast Turkey*.

These projects, and others, led Ronayne to develop research-led teaching in these areas, initiating the first permanent public archaeology course taught at an Irish third level institution not long after her appointment, a field now considered essential in archaeology in Ireland and internationally.

The appointment of Elizabeth FitzPatrick as a lecturer in medieval archaeology was another significant event at this time. Her research interests lay in medieval settlement, particularly in the archaeology of the medieval church, and Gaelic inauguration and assembly sites in Ireland and Scotland. A graduate of University College Galway she had undertaken a PhD on *The practice and siting of royal inauguration in medieval Ireland* in Trinity College Dublin. This was reshaped as a ground-breaking book entitled *Royal Inauguration in Gaelic Ireland c. 1100-1600. A Cultural Landscape Study* and published in 2004.

In this innovative cross-disciplinary study embracing landscape, archaeological, cartographic, and historical evidence, she explored the important role that inauguration sites played in the political life of later medieval Gaelic lordships. With Caimin O'Brien she published *The Medieval Churches of County Offaly* in 1998.



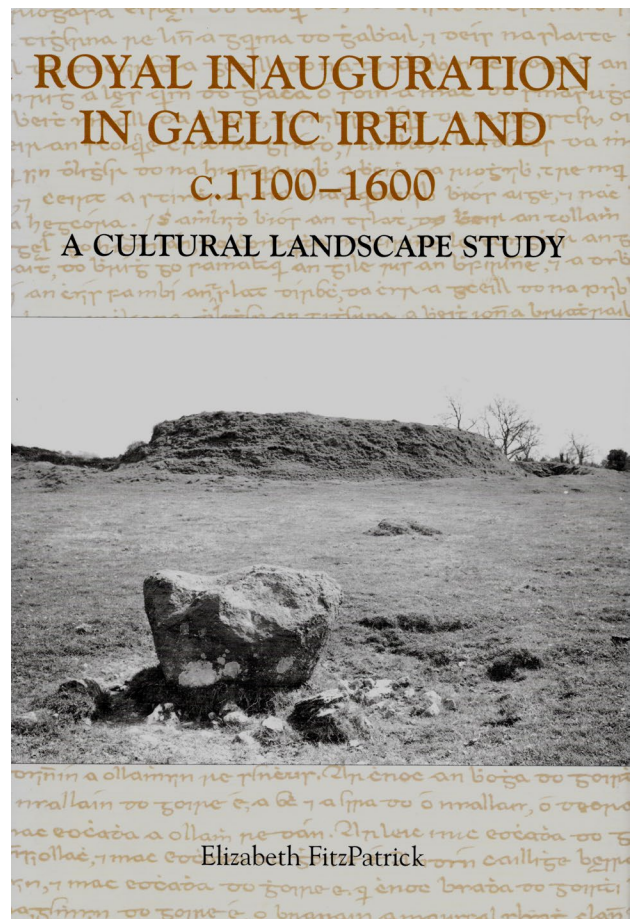


Elizabeth FitzPatrick

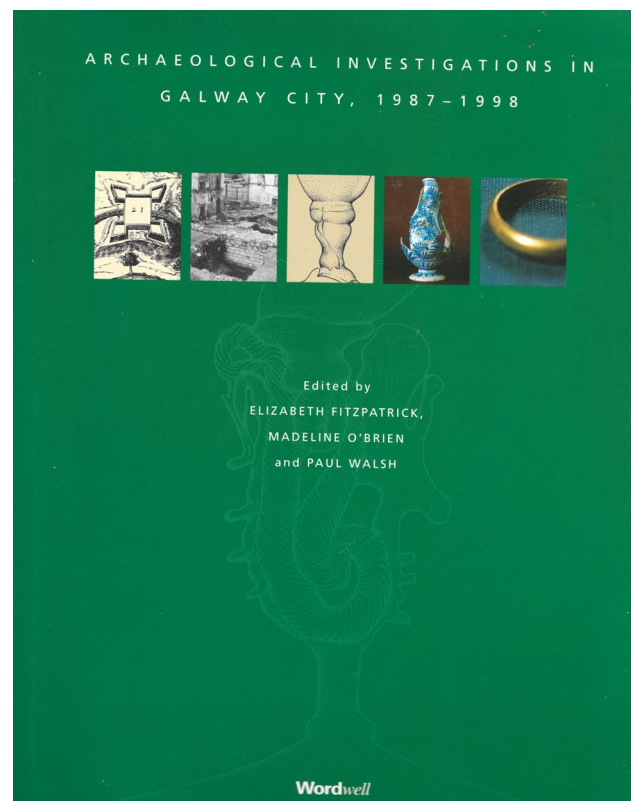
A successful application to the Heritage Council for a substantial grant saw the launch of her 'Galway Excavations Project' in the same year. Some 79 archaeological excavations had taken place in Galway city in the preceding decade and remained unpublished. They had revealed an immense amount of information about the medieval and later city, about its dwellings, fortifications and the daily life of its inhabitants. Funding in excess of €200,000 allowed the employment of expert staff and Angela Gallagher assisted with the standardization of maps, plans and sections. The results, with numerous specialist contributions, were published with exemplary speed in a 706-page volume in 2004.



The derelict Browne mansion 'in a derelict town' and the well-known Browne doorway at the corner of Lower Abbeygate Street and St Augustine Street c. 1904. From *Archaeological Investigations in Galway City 1987-1998*.



The cover of Elizabeth FitzPatrick's *Royal Inauguration in Gaelic Ireland* depicts two of the monuments at the O'Brien inauguration site at Magh Adhair, near Quin, Co. Clare.



The Galway Excavations Project was published as *Archaeological Investigations in Galway City 1987-1998*, edited by Elizabeth FitzPatrick, Madeline O'Brien and Paul Walsh in 2004.





Students on a field trip to Poulnabrone in the Burren, Co. Clare c. 2000.

The early years of the new millennium would see further significant progress. Kieran O'Connor joined the academic staff in 2000 as lecturer in medieval archaeology. He was a graduate of University College Dublin and Cardiff University where he had completed a PhD on *The Earthwork Castles of Medieval Leinster*. He had worked for much of the 1990s for the Archaeological Survey Branch of the National Monuments Service in Roscommon, Sligo, Longford, Westmeath and Wexford. In 1996 he excavated Carlow Castle as part of his work for the that institution. He had taken part in excavations and field surveys in England, Wales, mainland Greece and Crete.



Kieran O'Connor

He had just published a major report for the Discovery Programme entitled *The Archaeology of Medieval Rural Settlement in Ireland*. The greater part of this major work, dealing with settlement and society in Gaelic Ireland, was the first comprehensive study of the landscape and settlement forms of the native Irish. His research interests include castles, medieval rural settlement, high medieval Gaelic Ireland and medieval landscapes.

The staff in Archaeology now comprised six permanent academic staff, one senior technician, and one half-time administrative assistant. There were over 160 full-time First Year students, some forty Second Year students and a similar number of Third Year students. In addition there were over sixty visiting students taking various courses.

There were eleven MA students and two PhD students enrolled at this time and the number of postgraduate students who had undertaken theses over the preceding two decades numbered approximately forty. The undergraduate teaching programme was extensive with an international component. Modular courses for First Years included 'Ireland: First Settlers to the Age of Metal' and 'Ireland: Early Celts to Gaelic Lordships'. In Second Year students could study 'Hunters and Farmers in Early Europe', 'Europe in the Age of Metal', 'Introduction to Archaeological Fieldwork' and 'The Archaeology of the Celtic World'. There were optional courses such as 'Ritual and Royalty: the royal sites of Ireland from prehistory to 1600' and 'Theory, Interpretation and Archaeology'.





Students on a fieldtrip to the Hill of Tara in 1997. The photograph by Robert Chapple shows them in the large linear earthwork known as the 'Banqueting Hall'.

In Third Year modules included 'Ireland from the Viking Age to the coming of the Normans', 'Archaeological Methodology', 'Patterns in Early Irish Prehistory', 'Gaelic and Plantation Society and Settlement', 'Computing and Archaeological Science' and 'The Development of the Castle in Medieval Europe'. Archaeology staff were also active participants in various Adult Education programmes. Field trips were a frequent and important part of the teaching programme.

The long-standing association with Celtic Studies continued and a BA in Celtic Civilization was introduced in that Faculty in 2004-5. Archaeology contributed to a full-year course for First Years entitled 'Early and Medieval History of the Celts'. This collaboration was also an important part of 'The Connacht Project' with Professor Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha. This interdisciplinary research initiative investigates both the archaeological evidence at some western sites and monuments and aspects of the rich early Irish literary evidence relating to the ancient province of Connacht. In addition to exploring the medieval literature and related archaeology of the region, it has a community outreach component that aims to share research with Connacht communities. Its most recent archaeological accomplishment is Kieran O'Connor's major study of Moygara Castle published in 2023.

An Achill Field School was established in the 1990s. This long-running school offers training in archaeological surveying and excavation and some courses in archaeology, accredited by the University. It was founded by Theresa McDonald who had done an MA on *The Archaeology of Achill Island* in 1998. Author of several guidebooks to the island, she would complete a PhD in 2014 on *Booleying in Achill, Achillbeg and Corraun: Survey, excavation and analysis of booley settlements in the civil parish of Achill*. Booleying, the seasonal grazing of cattle in upland areas, was also the subject of Eugene Costello's PhD thesis in 2016: *Upland Transhumance Practices in Ireland, and their role in post-medieval settlement and society, c. 1550-1900 AD*.

The Caherconnell Archaeological Field School, in the Burren in Co. Clare, is directed by Michelle Comber. It offers accredited training in excavation techniques and recording. The Galway Archaeological Field School was created to provide students with hands-on experience of the archaeology and architecture of medieval Ireland. Its director is Rory Sherlock who has also participated in various research projects in Archaeology. Paul Naessens too has contributed to numerous projects and manages Western Aerial Survey and Photography Services.





Students excavating on the Caherconnell Archaeological Field School in the Burren in Co. Clare.

Other Galway graduates who are working or have worked in the commercial field include Frank Coyne of Aegis Archaeology, Declan Moore of Moore Archaeological and Environmental Services, Ros Ó Maoldúin and Eve Campbell in Archaeological Management Solutions, and Kate Robb in John Cronin and Associates.

An evening Diploma in Archaeology began in the mid-1990s. In 2000 (in collaboration with Co. Clare Vocational Educational Committee) Archaeology participated in a new part-time B.A. Degree Course in Ennis. Since Archaeology had a long history of extramural lecturing in the west of Ireland, it was not a surprise that this and the Diploma proved to be very popular. In later years Diplomas would be offered in other locations such as Sligo, Ennis and Roscommon with classes averaging about thirty. A wholly online version, created by Michelle Comber, started in 2015. Across all iterations of the Diploma—on-campus, off-campus, and online—over a thousand students have participated. Many of these have gone on to participate in or lead community development projects with an archaeological or heritage component.

Stefan Bergh was appointed lecturer in Archaeology in 2001. He had been Chief Archaeologist in the

National Heritage Board in Stockholm and had defended and published his doctoral thesis *Landscape of the Monuments. A study of the passage tombs in the Cuil Irra region, Co. Sligo, Ireland* in 1995. This was the first modern study of one of the most exceptional concentrations of prehistoric tombs in Ireland. He had been awarded a two-year post-doctoral research fellowship by the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Education for an archaeological project on Knocknarea, Co. Sligo: 'The Sacred Mountain. The identity of a landscape' in 1998. Two years later he won a two-year Research Fellowship from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences for a project entitled 'Defining Ritual Space in the Irish Neolithic'.

Carleton Jones was undertaking some part-time teaching in Archaeology at this time—notably on the Diploma in Archaeology in Galway and in Ennis. A graduate of California State University, he had completed a PhD at the University of Cambridge on *Perceived and Constructed Landscapes in Neolithic Ireland*. He published *The Burren and the Aran Islands*—exploring the archaeology in 2004.

Michelle Comber was also a part-time lecturer in Archaeology. A Galway graduate, her MA thesis





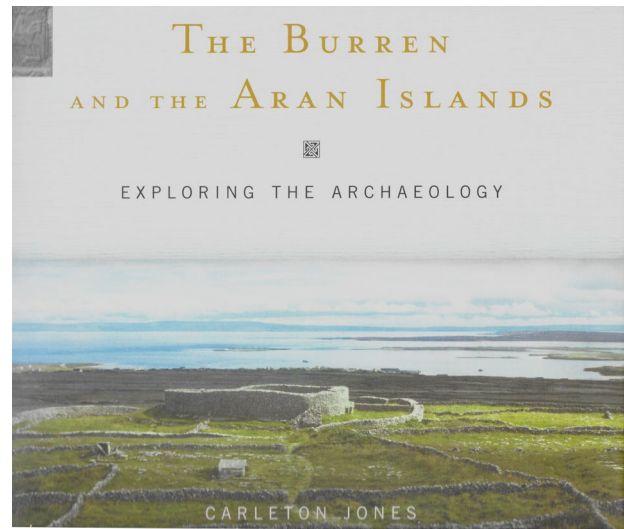
Stefan Bergh

was on the subject of fine metalwork in early medieval Ireland: *Native Evidence of Non-ferrous Metalworking in Early Historic Ireland*. As one of the first Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholars she completed a PhD in 2000 entitled *The Economy of the Ringfort in Early Historic Ireland*.

She was also employed in the University's Irish Studies programme in charge of the archaeology programme development and course facilitation of 'Irish Studies Online', a series of web-based courses in Irish Studies developed by the University in conjunction with Regis University, Denver, Colorado. In Archaeology she had particular responsibility for the evening Diploma in Archaeology in Sligo. Her research on metalworking and ringfort settlement was published as two substantial monographs in 2004 and 2008.



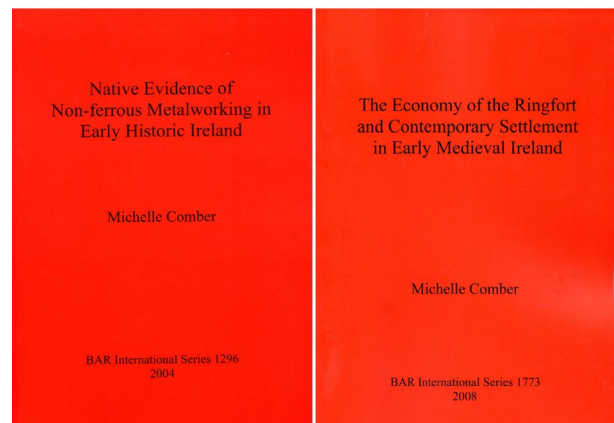
Michelle Comber



*The Burren and the Aran Islands* by Carleton Jones published in 2004.

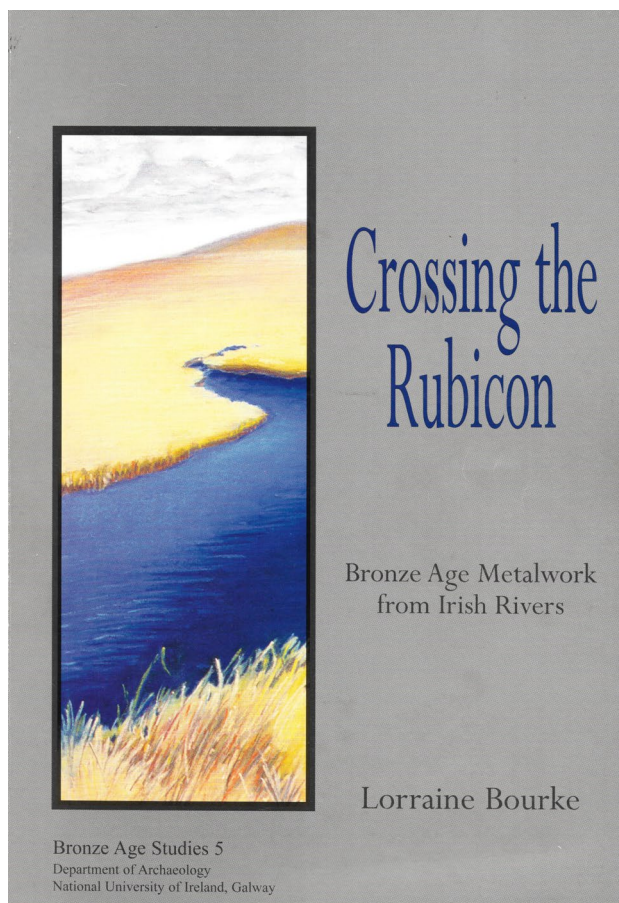
Today, on the permanent academic staff, her research interests lie mainly in the archaeology of Ireland's early medieval period, especially its metalwork, economy and settlement. She has lectured in Ireland and abroad and published numerous important studies in her field.

It is an interesting coincidence that two further books in Archaeology's 'Bronze Age Studies' series were published at much the same time as her two monographs. They all serve to emphasize the exceptional publishing record of the Archaeology Department. Lorraine Bourke commenced a study of the abundant Bronze Age metalwork recovered from some Irish rivers for her MA. Awarded a Travelling Scholarship by the National University of Ireland she undertook further research in the University of Reading and published the results in monograph form in 2001 as *Crossing the Rubicon. Bronze Age Metalwork from Irish Rivers*. She studied finds from the Bann, Ulster Blackwater, the Erne, the Shannon and the Barrow. The preponderance of bronze weapons from these watery contexts suggested this material represented a pattern of votive offerings of a ritual nature.



Two monographs by Michelle Comber on the archaeology of early medieval Ireland.



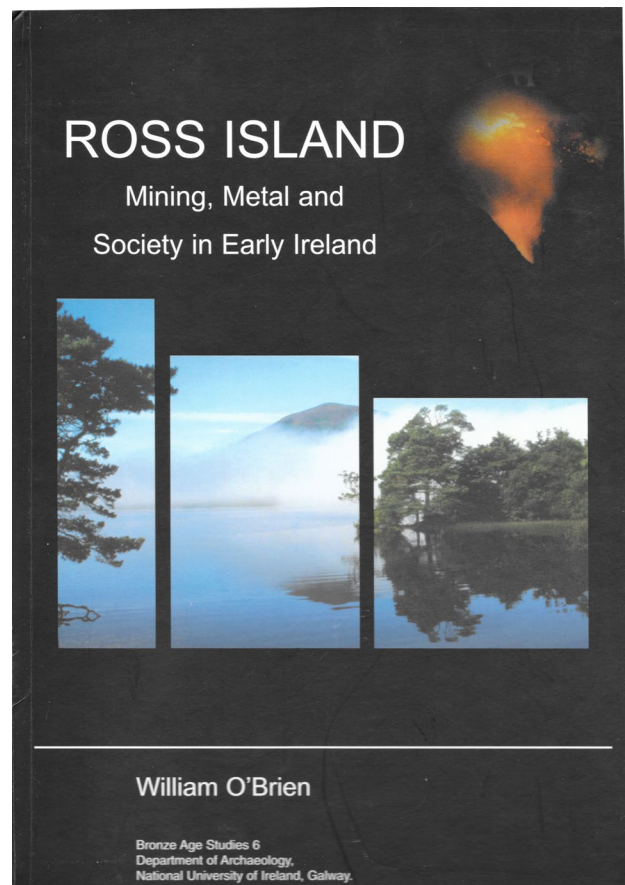


Lorraine Bourke's *Crossing the Rubicon*: Bronze Age Studies 5.

The sixth volume in the series was William O'Brien's account of his excavations at Ross Island, Killarney, Co. Kerry, in the 1990s. The discovery here of evidence for some of the earliest copper metalworking in Ireland and Britain was of international significance. Indeed it now seems that Ross Island was a major source of copper for both Ireland and Britain at the very beginning of the Bronze Age.

Many specialists from Ireland and abroad contributed to *Ross Island. Mining, Metal and Society in Early Ireland* and the excavations themselves provided training for some 100 students over several seasons. Different aspects of this unique site were explored in this major work, from its mining history in recent centuries to an archaeological record of copper extraction that stretches back to the dawn of the Bronze Age.

The complexities of a multi-period mining landscape were unpicked, using historical sources in combination with detailed survey and a major programme of archaeological excavation. This was an inter-disciplinary study that included an analysis of the geology and natural environment of the mine. The settlement background of the miners was examined within a broader understanding of metal and society in early Ireland. This 767-page



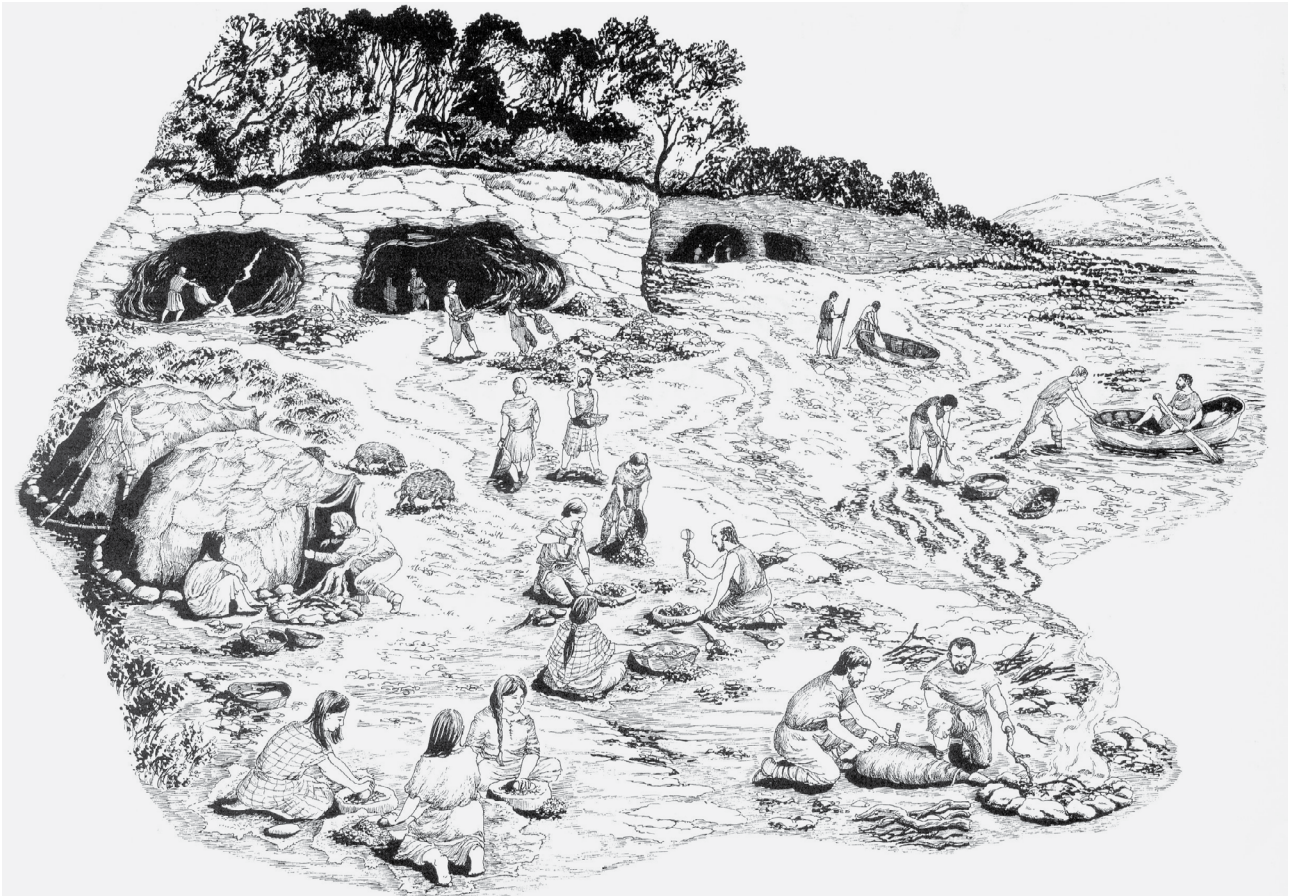
William O'Brien's *Ross Island*: Bronze Age Studies 6.

volume was, like Lorraine Bourke's work, an in-house publication with the expert assistance of Clódóirí Lurgan, Indreabhán.

Illustrating and describing books and monographs like these is of course a convenient way of depicting an extensive research output but it offers a very incomplete picture. Archaeological work in Galway also expressed itself in a huge number of articles published in learned journals and books, too numerous to mention.

Public lectures are too numerous to list as well but just to give some examples over a few years around the turn of the millennium, William O'Brien gave a series of lectures in the United States on archaeological perspectives on the origins of the Irish, in Savannah and in Augusta, Georgia. Carleton Jones lectured in London on the development of Bronze Age society in north Munster and on using the landscape to explore regionality in Ireland. Conor Newman spoke on Tara to the British Academy in London, in St. Michael's College, University of Toronto and to the Centre for Medieval Studies in the University of Minnesota. Elizabeth FitzPatrick lectured on the inauguration mounds in medieval Gaelic Ireland in the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford, and on royal Inauguration in Gaelic Ireland





An artist's reconstruction of the early mining and metalworking activity at Ross Island, Co. Kerry, from William O'Brien's *Ross Island*.

at the International Medieval Congress, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

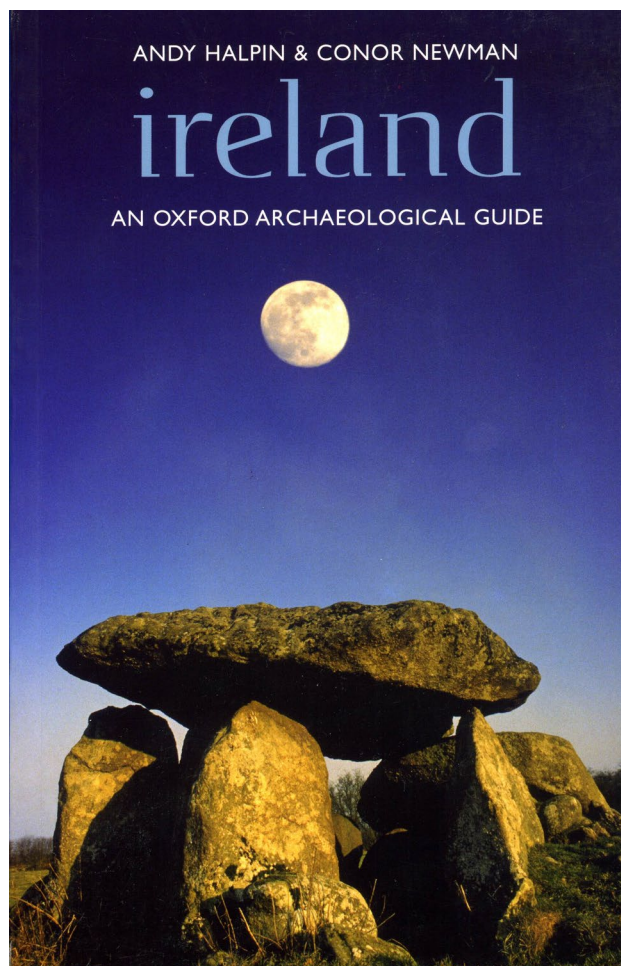
Kieran O'Connor was a keynote speaker at this Kalamazoo conference, lecturing on the archaeology of high medieval Gaelic Ireland. Maggie Ronayne lectured on the Ilisu Dam and the destruction of culture in the University of Bergen, in University College London and elsewhere. John Waddell delivered the Vernam Hull lecture in Harvard University in 2002 on the subject of his work at Rathcroghan.

The Department of Archaeology was one of the few University departments not to have integrated accommodation. At one time it was scattered in four different locations on campus. The new millennium would see academic and technical staff move to premises in the Arts-Science Building on the banks of the River Corrib with staff offices, a library and seminar room, a drawing office, a post-graduate computer suite, and dedicated post-graduate study accommodation that served to foster a sense of communal endeavour.



Partial view of the Department of Archaeology in the Arts-Science Building on the banks of the River Corrib.





*Ireland: An Oxford Archaeological Guide* by Conor Newman and Andy Halpin. The picture is of a dolmen at Haroldstown, Co. Carlow.

The following decades saw further important developments in Archaeology in Galway. William O'Brien departed to take up the position of Professor of Archaeology in University College Cork in 2006. Conor Newman, at the invitation of Professor Barry Cunliffe, University of Oxford, and Oxford University Press, produced *Ireland: An Oxford Archaeological Guide* (with Andy Halpin) in that year. This was a comprehensive and profusely illustrated guide to Irish prehistoric and medieval archaeology and to hundreds of important monuments.

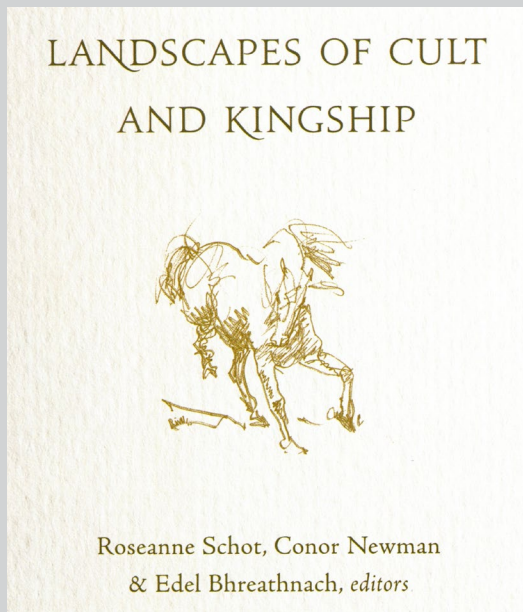
He has published many studies on medieval Irish art and one intriguing discovery is worth mentioning. He identified a diverse group of special stone monuments bearing marks apparently executed by the repeated to-and-fro movement of a sword blade. One good example is a cross-inscribed pillar stone at Kilnasaggart, Co. Armagh, that has some 55 narrow grooves incised near its base on one side. This early medieval ritual may have imbued the sword with some of the power of the stone and it may be one element in the origin of the famous Arthurian 'sword in the stone' motif.



Cross-inscribed pillar stone at Kilnasaggart, Co. Armagh, with marks made by a sword blade near its base and shown in the inset top right.

His interest in 'Tara of the Kings' and in the nature of early kingship prompted the organization of a conference on Irish kingship in a universal context in the Moore Institute in Galway in 2009. Concepts such as sacral kingship, the sacralization of landscape and royal sites were just some of the themes addressed by over a dozen contributors. The proceedings were edited by Roseanne Schot, Conor Newman and Edel Bhreathnach and published as *Landscapes of Cult and Kingship* in 2011. Roseanne Schot had been awarded a PhD in 2008 for her thesis *Uisneach, Co. Westmeath: archaeology, history and legend (prehistory - c. AD 1100)*.

The Seventh International Conference on Insular Art was held in Galway in 2014. The theme, addressed by over twenty-five international scholars, was the European and Mediterranean background and context to early medieval art in Ireland and Britain. The proceedings of this major event were edited by Conor Newman and two of his graduate students, Fiona Gavin and Mags Mannion who also contributed a paper on the use and symbolism of decorated glass beads in early medieval Ireland. The volume was published in 2017.

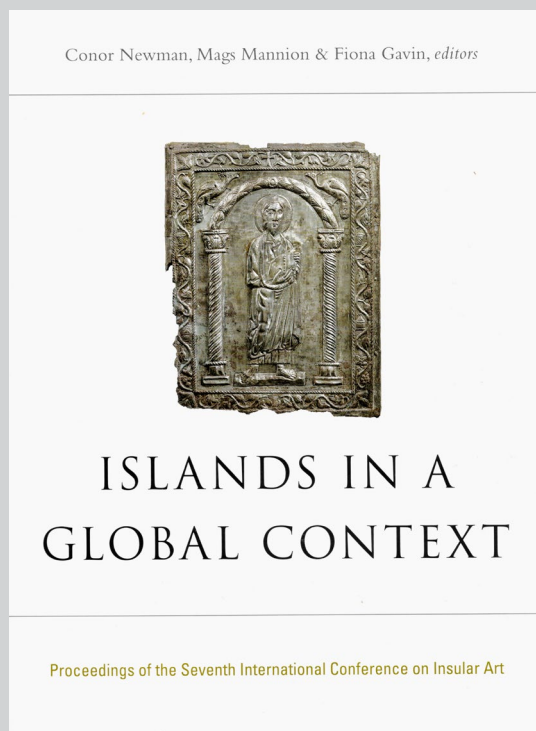


*Landscapes of Cult and Kingship* edited by Roseanne Schot, Conor Newman and Edel Bhreathnach.

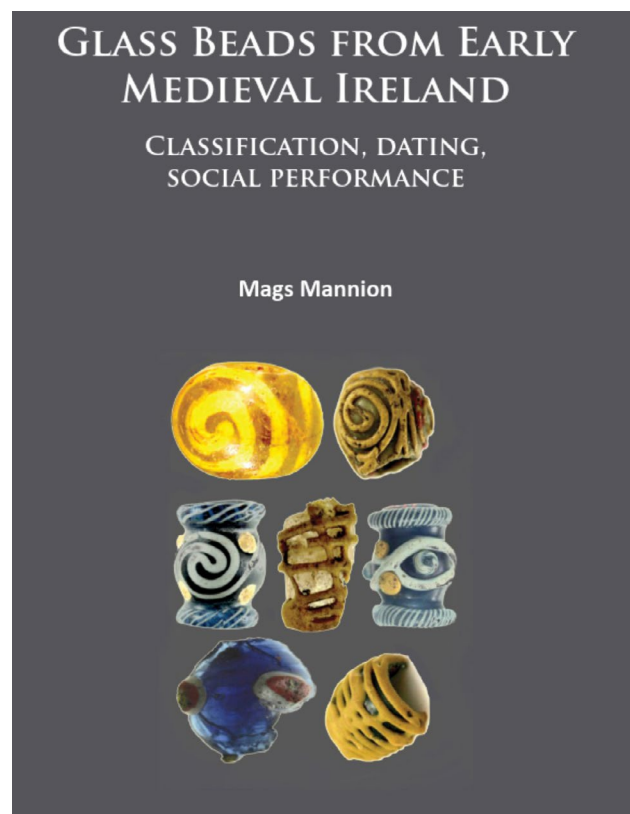
Mags Mannion's PhD thesis on *An Examination of Glass Beads from Early Medieval Ireland* was completed in 2013 and was the first dedicated and comprehensive study of this material in the country. It was published as a major monograph in 2015: *Glass Beads from Early Medieval Ireland: Classification, Dating, Social Performance*. Several studies by Fiona Gavin have represented a major advancement in our knowledge and understanding of how Ireland came under the influence of the late Roman world in the early centuries AD.

Phyllis Mercer published her 2014 PhD thesis *Ritual Aspects of Irish Portal Tombs* in the following year as *Irish Portal Tombs: a Ritual Perspective*. Fiona Beglane, who completed a PhD in 2012 on *Parks and Deer-hunting: evidence from Medieval Ireland* now lectures in the Atlantic Technological University in Sligo specializing in medieval and zooarchaeology. She published *Anglo-Norman Parks in Medieval Ireland* in 2015. Eugene Costello's PhD thesis on *Upland Transhumance Practices* was published as an award-winning book in 2020: *Transhumance and the Making of Ireland's Uplands, 1550-1900*. He is now a lecturer in history in University College Cork.

Katherine Leonard was another doctoral student who completed and promptly published her PhD at this time. Her thesis, in 2014, was on *Ritual in Late Bronze Age Ireland. Material Culture, Practices, Landscape Setting and Social Context*. Published in the following year, this

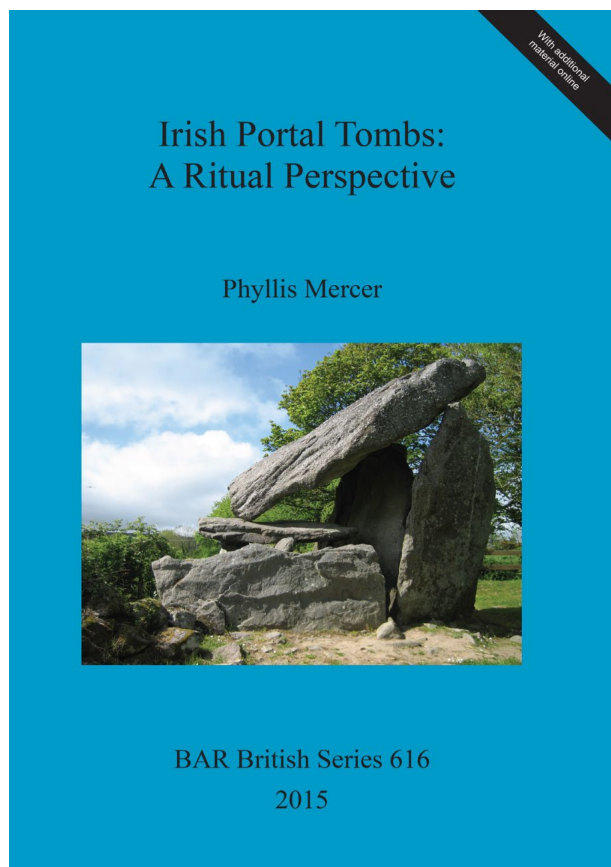


Conor Newman co-edited *Islands in a Global Context*, the proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Insular Art held in Galway in 2014. The image is a Byzantine silver plaque of 6th or 7th century date depicting St Paul holding a gospel book.



Mags Mannion's *Glass Beads from Early Medieval Ireland*.

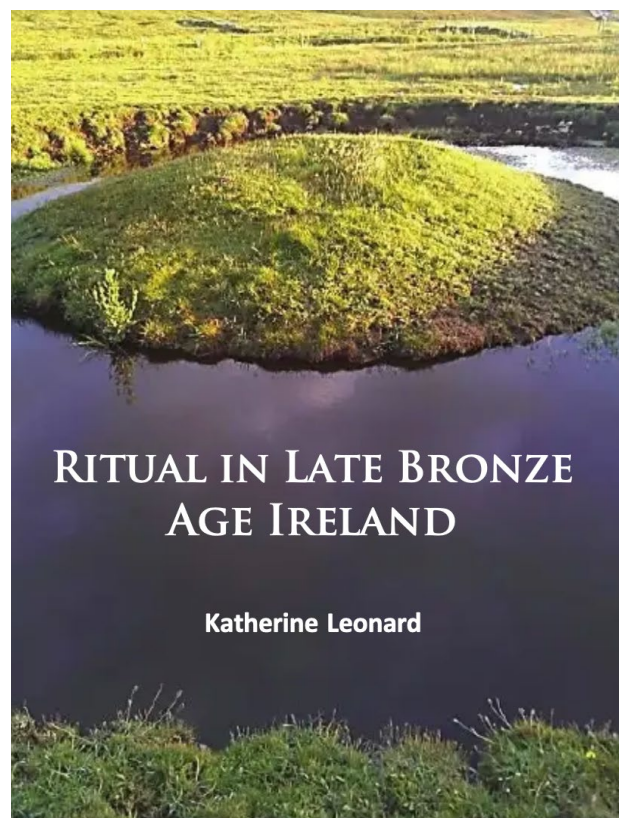




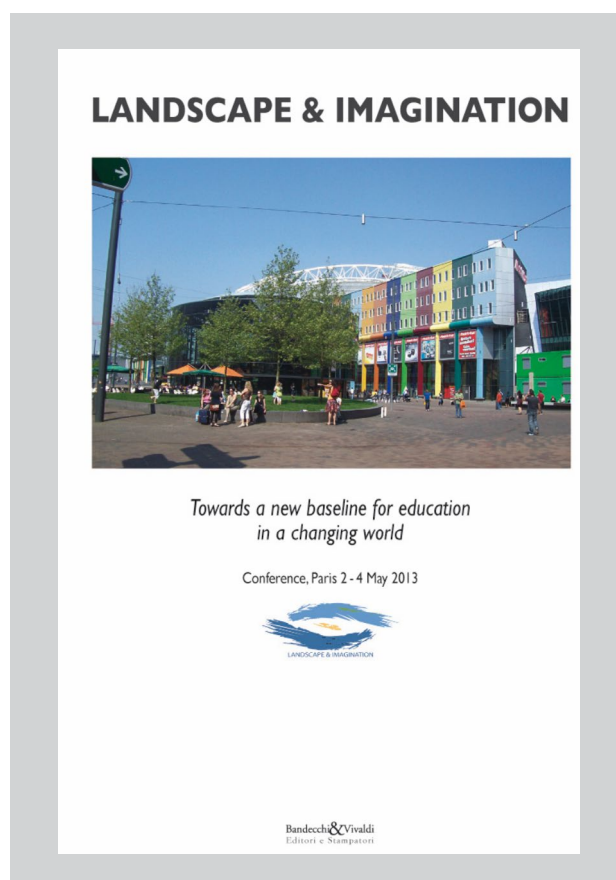
Phyllis Mercer's *Irish Portal Tombs: a Ritual Perspective*. A megalithic tomb at Kilmogue, near Harristown, Co. Kilkenny, is pictured.

was an extensive study of ritual practice in a variety of contexts in later prehistory; these included feasting rites, depositional practices, funerary ceremonial and ritualized landscapes. She noted a tendency to orientate ritual practice towards the west and by implication of possible solar significance. One curious example she cited was a concentration of burial mounds in the Doolin area in Co. Clare stretching along the Aille River and conceivably marking an ancient routeway towards the western ocean and the realm of the setting sun.

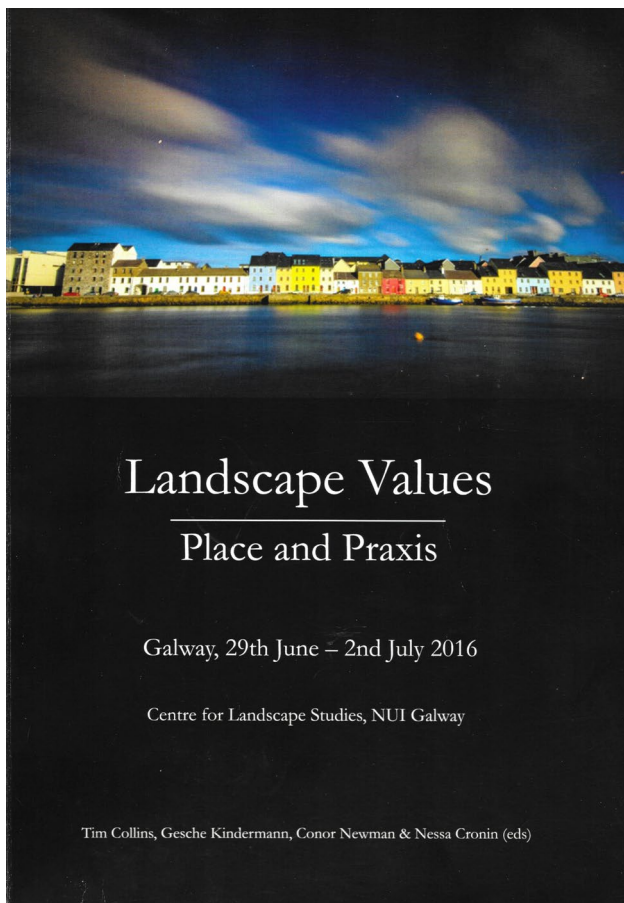
Conor Newman's work in landscape archaeology won him the British Academy's John Coles Medal for Landscape Archaeology in 2011. In 2008 he was appointed Chairman of the Heritage Council and served until 2016. He is Vice-President of UNISCAPE, a network of over 50 European universities committed to landscape education and research, and delivery of the European Landscape Convention. He co-edited the proceedings of UNISCAPE's 2013 conference *Landscape and Imagination: towards a new baseline for education in a changing world* held in Paris.



Katherine Leonard's *Ritual in Late Bronze Age Ireland*. The cover photograph is a burial mound at Doolin, Co. Clare, surrounded by a water-logged ditch.



Conor Newman co-edited the proceedings of the 2013 conference in Paris on *Landscape and Imagination: towards a new baseline for education in a changing world*.



The proceedings of the Galway conference on *Landscape Values* in 2016 were co-edited by Conor Newman.

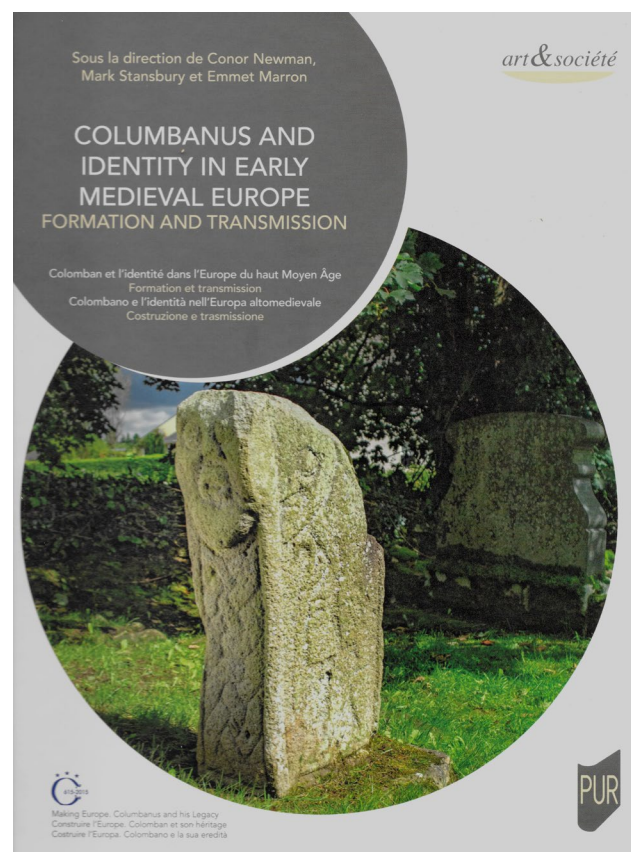
He also co-edited the proceedings of its 2016 conference *Landscape Values: Place and Praxis* held in Galway in association with the Moore and Ryan Institutes. Over seventy papers were presented addressing how landscape acquires meaning and value for both individuals and communities, and how it may be conserved and managed in a sustainable way.

He was a co-director of the 'Columbanus: life and legacy Project' supported by funding from PRTL 4. It aimed to explore the connections between Ireland and Europe resulting from the work of the great Irish missionary St Columbanus (c. 540-615). The year 2015 marked the fourteen hundredth anniversary of the death of this remarkable figure whose foundations on the Continent included Luxeuil in eastern France and Bobbio in northern Italy. No less than three international conferences were organized in that year. The proceedings have been published as a three-volume set by Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

The first volume, *L'Eredita de San Colombano*, appeared in 2017 and comprised papers from the Bobbio Conference in 2015. It included a study by Newman of a famous reliquary from Bobbio, arguably one of

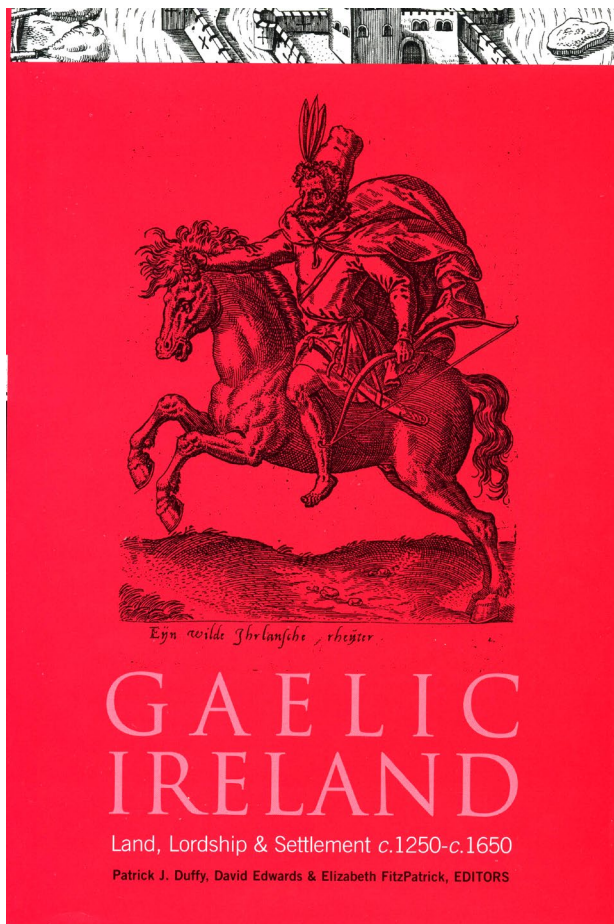
the earliest examples of native Christian metalwork from Ireland. Proceedings from the Luxeuil conference were published as *Columban et son influence* in 2018 and contained a report by Emmet Marron, a Galway graduate, on his programme of survey and excavation at the first foundation by Columbanus at Annegray in eastern France—the first such work carried out in collaboration with a team of Irish archaeologists on the Continent. Further excavations would take place at Basilica di San Colombano, Bobbio.

The third volume, *Columbanus and Identity in Early Medieval Europe*, was the result of a conference in Bangor, Co. Down, and appeared in 2022. It was edited by Conor Newman, Mark Stansbury and Emmet Marron, and contained a paper on excavations at the island monastery of Cleenish, Co. Fermanagh, the place of Columbanus' early education. Geophysical survey and test excavation here, at Claoín Inis on Upper Lough Erne, by Newman, Marron, Roseanne Schot and Ros Ó Maoldúin produced evidence of intensive occupation and use.



The third volume in a series on the life and legacy of St Columbanus was published in 2022. Entitled *Columbanus and Identity in Early Medieval Europe*, it was edited by Conor Newman, Mark Stansbury and Emmet Marron. The illustration is a carved pillar stone at Killadeas, Co. Fermanagh, and the figure on the right is said to be that of a cleric carrying a crozier and a bell.





*Gaelic Ireland c. 1250–c. 1650. Land, Lordship and Settlement* edited by Elizabeth FitzPatrick, Patrick J. Duffy and David Edwards. The cover image is a 'wild Irish horseman' from a 16th century German engraving.

A new project 'In the Footsteps of Columbanus' is attempting the first examination of all the early medieval Insular reliquaries in Italy. It was inspired by the chance discovery of a spectacular example at Brallo, associated with Bobbio.

Elizabeth FitzPatrick continued to investigate aspects of settlement and society in the post-Norman Gaelic world. The renaissance of multi-disciplinary interest in this aspect of later medieval Ireland was the subject of *Gaelic Ireland c. 1250–c. 1650. Land, Lordship and Settlement* which she co-edited with Patrick J. Duffy and David Edwards in 2001. Her essay in this volume was a detailed study of the assembly and inauguration places of the Burkes in late medieval Connacht.

Subsequent years would see survey and excavation at a settlement associated with the O'Davoren Brehon Law School at Cahermacnaghten, in the Burren, Co. Clare. Further work was undertaken on the assembly places and hunting grounds of Gaelic elites and on a novel exploration of the burial place of an exiled Gaelic Irish community at San Pietro in Montorio, Rome.

She successfully supervised numerous MA and PhD students. One of the latter was Paul Naessens who did a PhD entitled *The Ui Fhlaithbheartaigh Gaelic Lordship of Iarchonnacht: Medieval Lordly Settlement on the Atlantic Seaboard* in 2009. His expertise in drone aerial survey and photography would make a major contribution to other archaeological research projects in Galway.

FitzPatrick edited, with Audrey Horning and Eve Campbell, *Becoming and Belonging in Ireland AD c.1200–1600: essays in identity and cultural practice* in 2018. This was a major study of the cultural complexities of an Ireland populated by Gaelic, Anglo-Norman, Old English and New English communities. Eve Campbell had completed a PhD in 2012 on *Displacement and Relocation in Early Modern Ireland: Studies of Transplantation Settlement in Connacht and Clare*. FitzPatrick was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Harvard University in 2012. She retired in 2021.

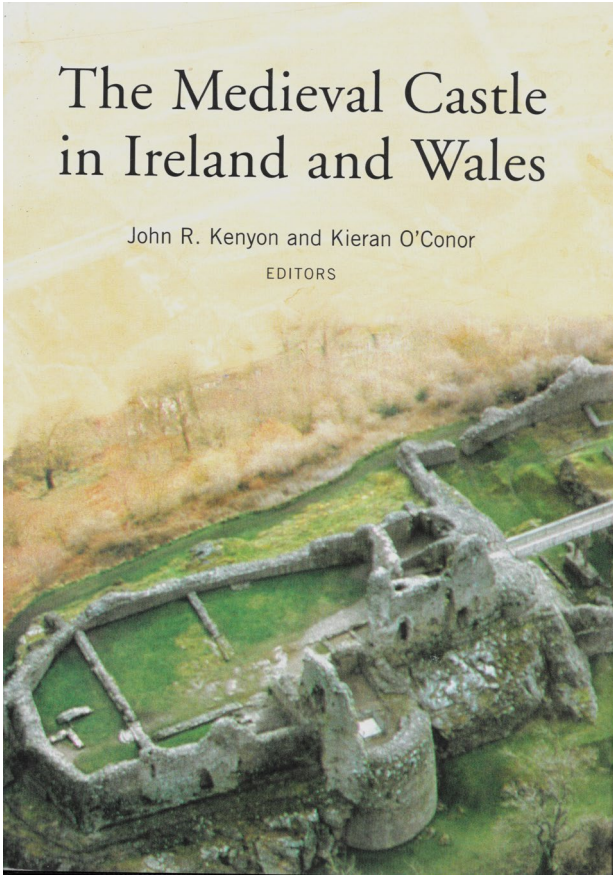
Maggie Ronayne developed a research interest in historical archaeology of the recent past and its amalgamation with a community archaeology approach. She has undertaken extensive fieldwork and supervised postgraduate research on several under-studied aspects of 19th century rural Ireland. A community-based research project on the archaeology of the Famine is focused on the northern Burren around Ballyvaughan in Co. Clare.

Her interest in the growing and topical social justice field of 'Difficult Heritage' has led her to undertake fieldwork, postgraduate supervision and teaching, from 2011 onwards, on a number of institutions of the recent past in Connacht and Munster such as workhouses, asylums, Magdalen laundries and industrial schools. This included several months of salvage work, assisted by students of the Department, at St Bridget's psychiatric hospital in Ballinasloe (originally a 19th century asylum) under an agreement between the University and the Health Service Executive.

Kieran O'Connor is actively engaged in teaching and research in the medieval field, and publishes widely especially in the area of castle studies and other fortifications. He has demonstrated that earthwork and timber fortifications continued to be constructed along with stone castles in medieval Ireland. In 2003 he co-edited with John R. Kenyon an important series of essays entitled *The Medieval Castle in Ireland and Wales* in which a majority of the articles dealt with Irish castles. In his paper in this volume he examined some coastal earthworks on Baginbun Head in County Wexford and

# The Medieval Castle in Ireland and Wales

John R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Connor  
EDITORS



*The Medieval Castle in Ireland and Wales* edited by John R. Kenyon and Kieran O'Connor. The cover photograph is an aerial view of the ruins of Montgomery Castle in Wales.

interpreted them as a base camp for Strongbow's invasion forces. This implied, as he pointed out, that Strongbow was a far better military planner and commander than the rather negative historical sources would suggest. This is just one instance where archaeology has clarified the historical record.

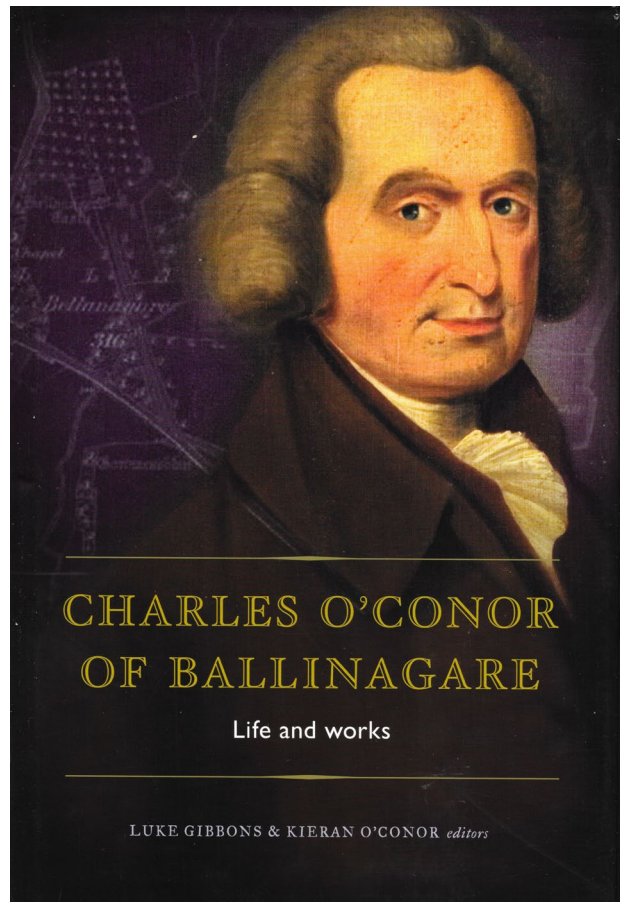
He has been an active editor of the English-language edition of the international peer-reviewed journal *Château Gaillard*, that promotes castle studies across Europe and is named after the famous castle built by Richard the Lionheart on the banks of the River Seine in Normandy. Amongst his papers in this forum are studies of Rindoon Castle, Co. Roscommon, and pre-Norman fortifications in Ireland in the 11th and 12th century. He has been President and Vice-President of this pan-European organization.

O'Connor is also a member of Ruralia, another international association, that promotes the study of the archaeology of medieval and post-medieval settlement and rural life. He was awarded the Archaeological Institute of America's Samuel H. Kress Lectureship in 2018, and gave a series of public lectures in Canada

and the United States on topics such as 'The Castles of Ireland' and 'Elite Settlement in Gaelic Ireland, 1169-1350 AD'. Also in the United States, at the invitation of the American Society for Irish Medieval Studies, he gave the 2019 Robert T. Farrell Lecture at the 54th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

A study of Ballinagare Castle formed one chapter in a detailed and wide ranging account of the life and works of Charles O'Connor of Ballinagare that he co-edited with Luke Gibbons. The famous composer and harpist Turlogh O'Carolan was a frequent visitor to Ballinagare and it had been the home of the greatest of Irish historians of the 18th century; it was here that Charles O'Connor wrote his influential *Dissertations on the Ancient History of Ireland*.

Like all his colleagues in Archaeology, Kieran O'Connor appreciates the importance and value of sharing and distributing archaeological knowledge to local people. In 2018 he co-edited a large 883-page volume on *Roscommon History and Society* in the long-established series of county histories overseen by William



*Charles O'Connor of Ballinagare* edited by Luke Gibbons and Kieran O'Connor in 2015. The portrait of O'Connor on the cover is in Clonalis House.



# Roscommon Castle

## A Visitor's Guide

By Margaret Murphy and Kieran O'Connor



# Roscommon Abbey

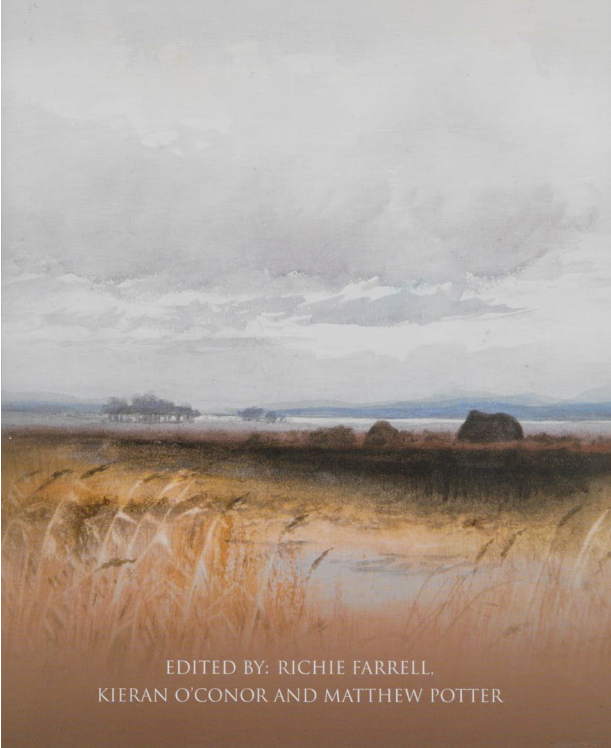
## A Visitor's Guide

By Kieran O'Connor and Brian Shanahan



# ROSCOMMON HISTORY AND SOCIETY

Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish County



EDITED BY: RICHIE FARRELL.  
KIERAN O'CONOR AND MATTHEW POTTER

# Rindoon Castle and Deserted Medieval Town

## A Visitor's Guide

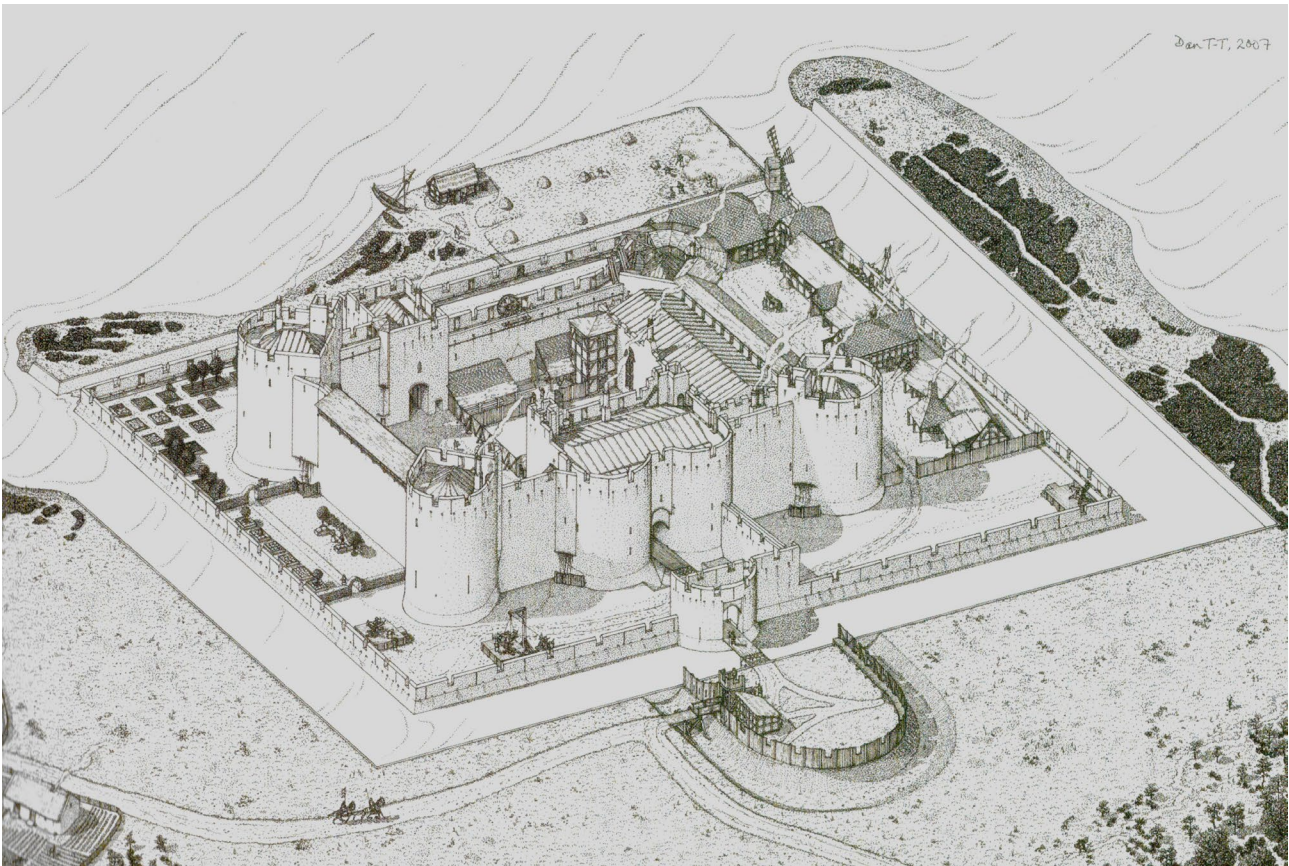
By Kieran O'Connor and Brian Shanahan



Guide books to Roscommon Castle, Roscommon Abbey and Rindoon initiated and co-written by Kieran O'Connor and published in 2008, 2013 and 2018 respectively.

*Roscommon History and Society. Interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish County* was edited by Richie Farrell, Kieran O'Connor and Matthew Potter. The cover picture is a painting of the French Park Estate by Percy French in 1893.





Daniel Tietzsch-Tyler's reconstruction of Roscommon Castle as it would have appeared around 1300 from *Roscommon Castle. A Visitor's Guide* by Margaret Murphy and Kieran O'Connor.

Nolan and Geography Publications. His contribution, with Thomas Finan, surveyed medieval settlement in north Roscommon. Other archaeological essays were by Noel McCarthy, Carleton Jones, John Waddell and Joe Fenwick.

Several guidebooks to major Roscommon monuments were another significant contribution to local heritage studies and are especially good examples of community engagement. Based on expert research by various authorities they provided an informative and valuable introduction to major sites like Roscommon Castle, Roscommon Abbey and the medieval fortified settlement and harbour at Rindoon on Lough Ree.

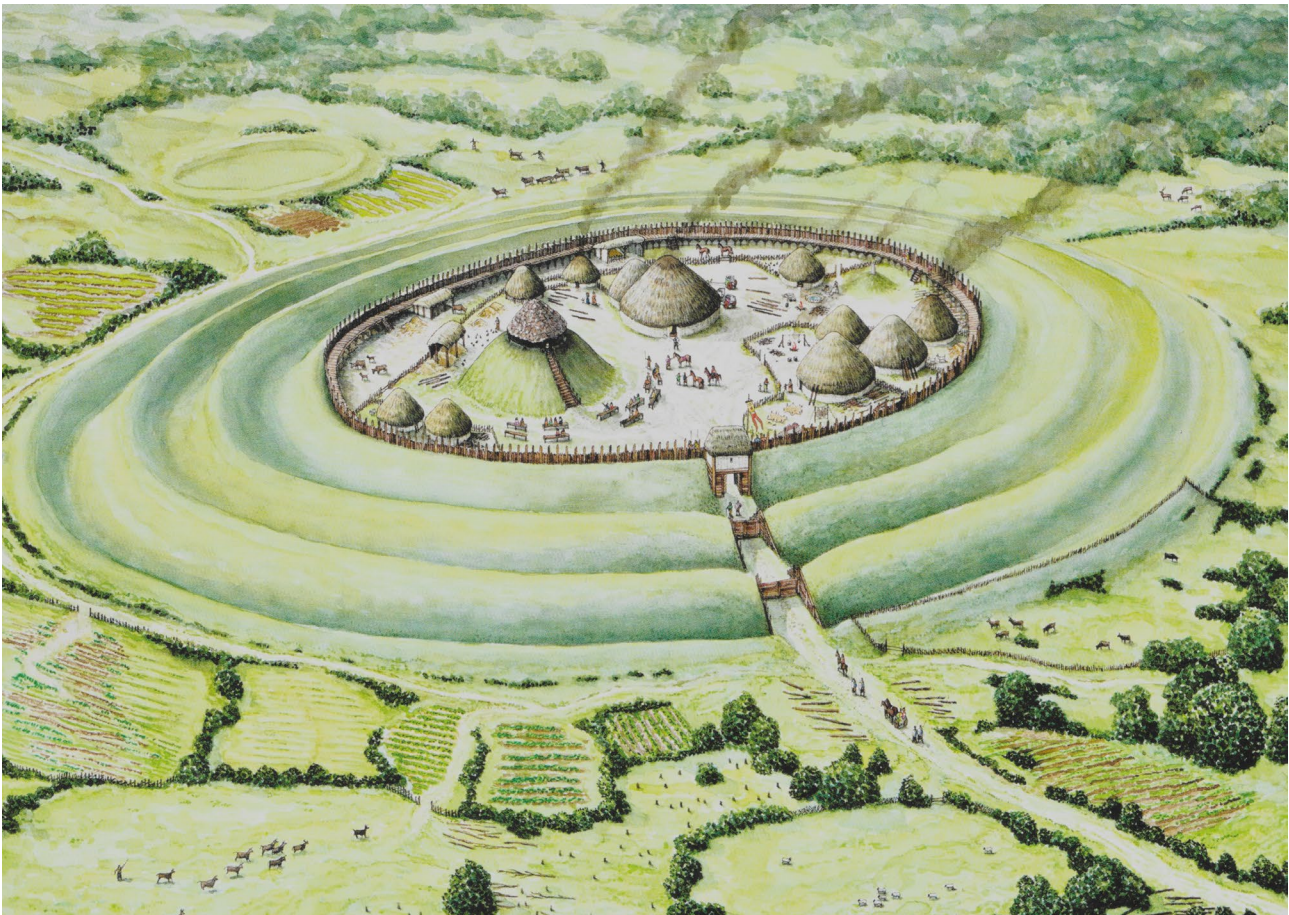
While archaeological plans of monuments are very important and illuminating, and may have a certain charm, they are of specialist interest. One of the innovative features of these guides is a series of carefully drawn reconstructions of each monument at different stages of its history by the talented artist Daniel Tietzsch-Tyler. He had undertaken a M.Litt thesis in Galway on *Reconstruction Drawing and its Value to Archaeological Inquiry, with an Irish case study* in 2009.

Joe Fenwick, Archaeological Field Officer and Senior Technician in Archaeology, had completed an MA degree in Archaeology in 1997, the title of his thesis being *A Study of Rathra: a Multivallate Enclosure in Co. Roscommon*. His expertise in topographical and geophysical survey has been put to good use at Rathcroghan and in the Boyne Valley and he has published several papers on his investigations at these two important locations.

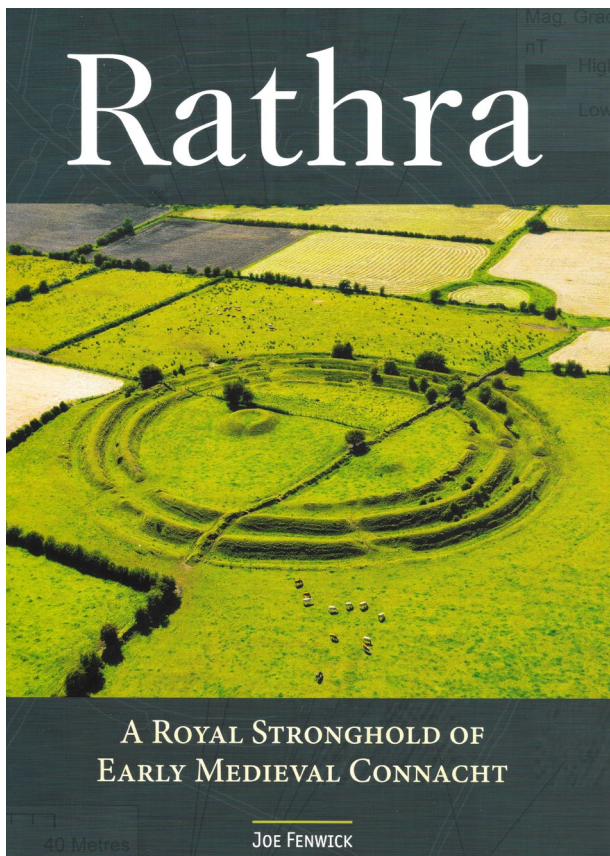


Joe Fenwick





Joe Fenwick and Uto Hogerzeil's conjectural reconstruction of medieval Rathra showing how this remarkable place may have looked like in medieval times.



*Rathra. A Royal Stronghold of Early Medieval Connacht* by Joe Fenwick.

His survey work at Rathra, an exceptional multi-ramparted earthwork near Castlerea, formed the basis for a monograph on this monument in 2022. Its size, complexity and location suggest it may have been a royal site. Again in this detailed account Fenwick offered a conjectural reconstruction (with Uto Hogerzeil) showing how this remarkable place may have looked like in medieval times.

The original geophysical survey work at Rathcroghan demonstrated that the great mound there was a very complex monument with circular structures entombed within it and other wooden monuments once built on its summit. In one of his subsequent studies of this monument Joe Fenwick and the illustrator J.G. O'Donoghue have offered an interesting reconstruction of how Rathcroghan may have looked like at one time in the Iron Age.

The great mound was the focal monument in what was probably a great ceremonial centre all set in a great circular enclosure over 300m in diameter. The central mound, with an approach way defined by timber palisades, supported a large circular timber hall. This imaginative reconstruction, published in Fenwick's article





An imaginative reconstruction of Iron Age ceremonial at Rathcroghan by Joe Fenwick and J.G. O'Donoghue.

in *Roscommon History and Society* and prepared for the Rathcroghan Visitor Centre in Tulsk, Co. Roscommon, is an excellent example of its kind and certain to capture the public imagination. This heritage centre is managed by Daniel Curley whose PhD thesis *A Multi-disciplinary Study of Lordly Centres in the Later Medieval Uí Chellaig Lordship of Uí Maine, c.1100-1600 AD* was completed in 2021.

Kieran O'Connor and Joe Fenwick, and graduates like Daniel Curley and Kate Robb, are active participants in the 'Farming Rathcroghan EIP Project'. There are over twenty Government-funded European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) Projects in Ireland that aim to tackle current challenges in farming landscapes. 'Farming Rathcroghan' has the distinction of being the only one with a focus on farming in a major archaeological landscape. It has developed and implemented a number of innovative archaeological protection practices to support the farming community in its sustainable management of this highly significant area.

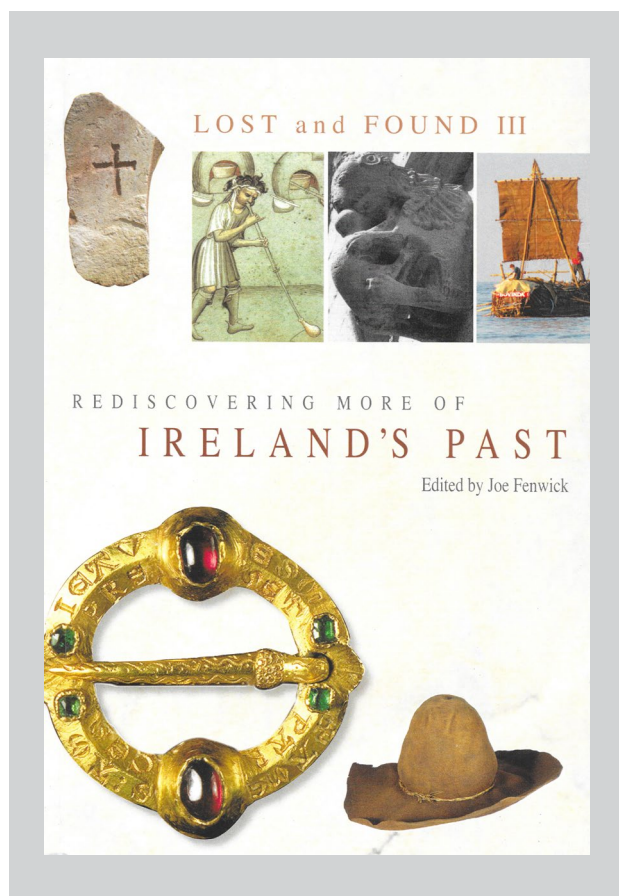
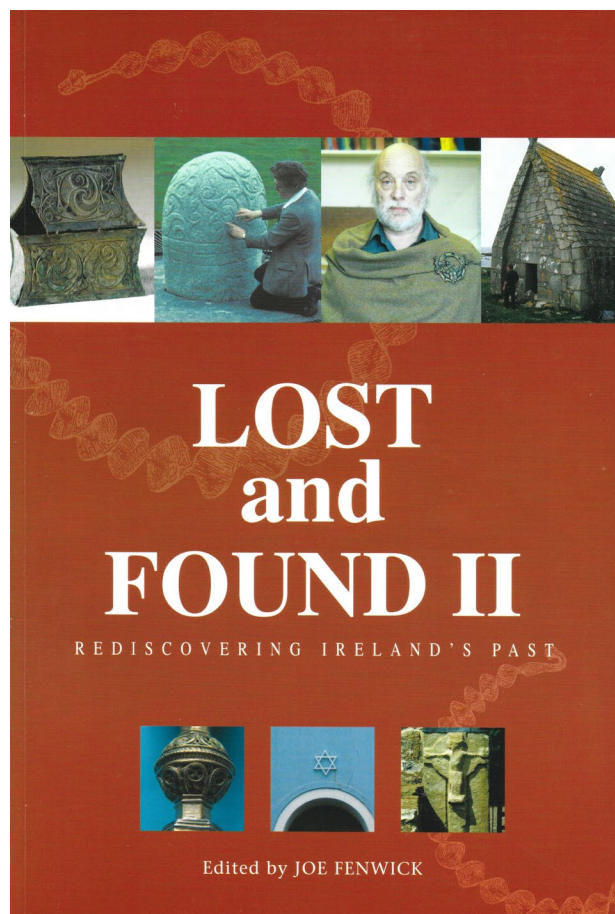
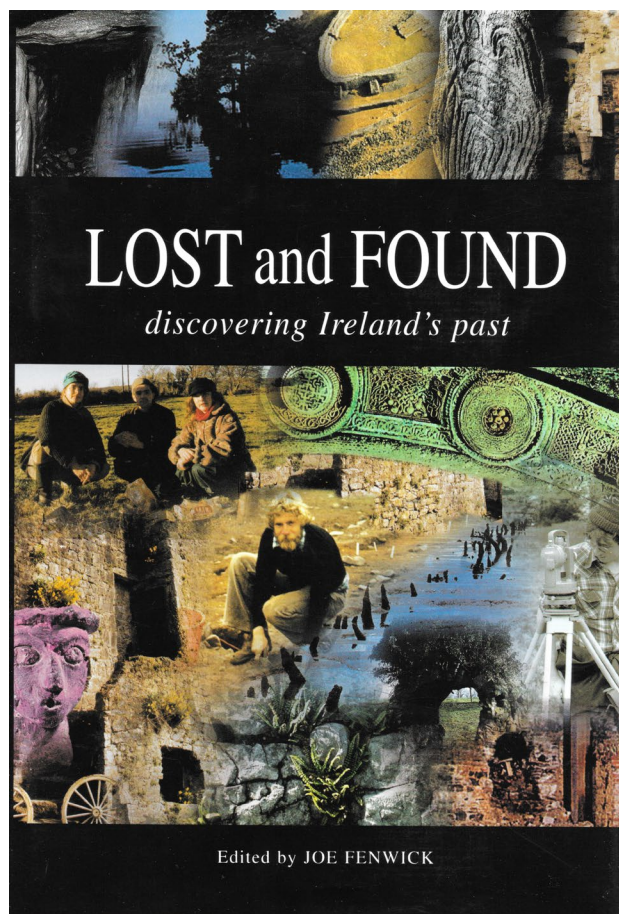
Joe Fenwick would tell the tale of the detection of the huge timber circle on the Hill of Tara in 1998 in one volume of his *Lost and Found* trilogy. The excitement of

seeing, for the first time, the ghostly shadow of a major prehistoric monument in a computer's memory was a good example of the thrill of archaeological discovery. He edited three books in his *Lost and Found* series, each recounting dozens of stories and reminiscences by archaeologists and others.

Aimed at a popular audience, the objective was to illustrate the diverse role of archaeologists and the elation experienced when new finds and insights materialize. Topics ranged widely and included 'Two stones make a line' by Stefan Bergh, 'On the trail of an ancient highway: rediscovering Dála's Road' by Elizabeth FitzPatrick, 'The beads of Ballykilcline' by Charles Orser, 'The elephant and the tunnel' by Conor Newman, 'Boswell's Ogam' by John Waddell, and 'Ice pops, a tent and plaster of Paris: essential requirements for excavation' by Rory Sherlock.

Carleton Jones, appointed as lecturer to the permanent academic staff in 2007, published his book *Temples of Stone* in same year. He had been directing a long-term field project of survey and excavation in the Burren, Co. Clare, for a number of years. Field walls of various periods are visible on the bare karst limestone terrain here and using an innovative methodology he has





been able to identify a remarkable range of prehistoric field systems of different dates. The exposed limestone has eroded over the years but the bedrock beneath older walls is higher having been protected from erosion in varying degree. This allows the relative dates of different wall systems to be established.

Prehistoric settlement has been studied at three locations and in all three the landscape is composed of a variety of enclosures, field systems and ritual monuments. This is one of the few locations in Ireland where fields and associated dwellings have been dated with a degree of certainty.

He has excavated a megalithic tomb at Parknabinnia and discovered the remains of some twenty individuals, including males, females and children, deposited there in the period 3700 BC to 2800 BC. In a peculiar ritual a large number of hare bones were placed in the tomb along with the human remains. Multi-isotope analysis of some bones demonstrates that some individuals represented by unburnt bone samples were non-local perhaps coming from the area of the Slieve Aughty mountains to the east.

A study of some of their ancient DNA indicated the importance of patrilineal descent in the selection process

Three volumes in Joe Fenwick's *Lost and Found* series published in 2003, 2009 and 2018.





Excavation of a megalithic tomb at Parknabinnia, Co. Clare: a small tomb that produced exceptional results.

for burial. Here as elsewhere this sort of genetic study has the exciting potential to revolutionize our understanding of prehistory. The pioneering Parknabinnia analyses were published by Carleton Jones in a multi-authored paper on

genomic samples from all of the major Irish megalithic tomb traditions. The results appeared in the international journal *Nature* in 2020.

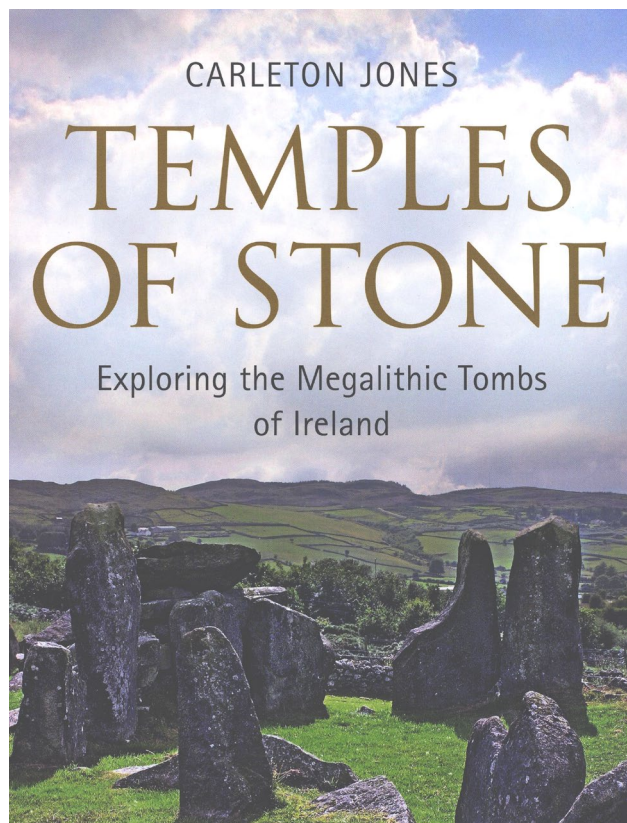


Carleton Jones

His *Temples of Stone* is very detailed and superbly illustrated account of our understanding of the megalithic tomb phenomenon in Ireland. Places like Parknabinnia were both tombs and shrines and various rituals may have taken place not just within but also outside the monument. Rites may have included the formal exchange of human bones and the elaborate processing of corpses or body parts. His many papers have focused not just on megalithic tombs but on prehistoric settlement and society as well. He has taught widely on prehistoric topics and has, like Conor Newman and Maggie Ronayne, contributed to the MA in Landscape Archaeology.

This long-running and highly successful MA programme was developed and directed by Stefan Bergh. A taught programme with a major dissertation, course





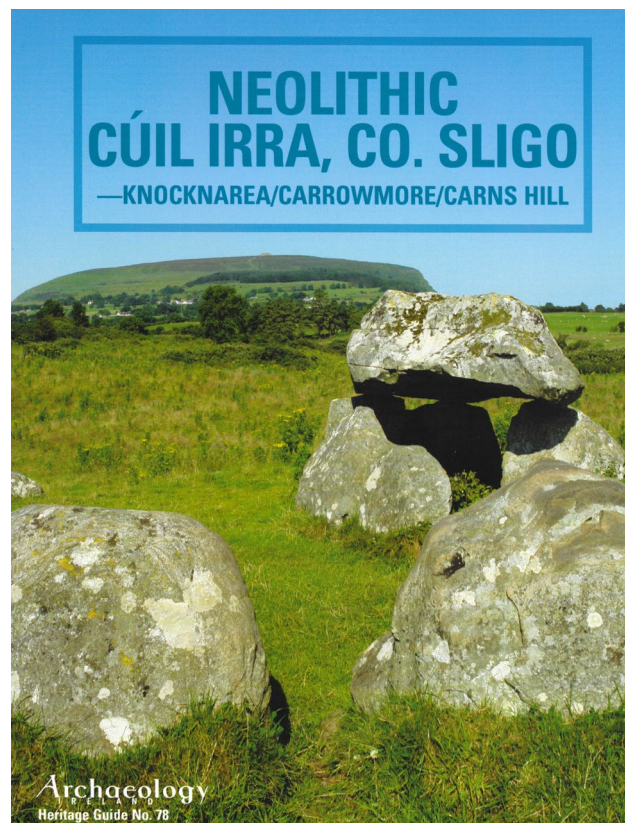
*Temples of Stone. Exploring the Megalithic Tombs of Ireland* by Carleton Jones. The photograph is of the entrance to a ruined megalithic tomb at Clontygora, Co. Armagh.

elements included theory in landscape archaeology, the archaeology of wetlands, of the prehistoric landscape, and of the medieval landscape, as well as tutorials and field exercises including geophysical prospection.

Some 149 theses have been completed to date, just over a quarter by students from abroad, notably the United States. Topics have included ‘Rising tides: a threat to Galway’s coastal archaeological landscape’, ‘Landscape Proofing: Environmental Impact Assessment in the Service of Sustainability’, ‘The mass rocks of west and south Mayo’, and ‘Paths in the landscape: a study of movement and communication’.

Stefan Bergh’s research on Knocknarea has revealed a series of earthen banks extending along its eastern flank that demarcate the higher ground and effectively make a monument of the mountain summit. He has published extensively on this famous mountain and other exceptional monuments in Cúil Irra in this part of Sligo—including an *Archaeology Ireland* Heritage Guide in 2017.

Mountains or high ground have always had a special role as significant spaces and he has studied monuments on Mullaghfarna, Co. Sligo, and Turlough Hill, Co. Clare, in particular. In dating the hundreds of house and hut



A guide to Neolithic Cúil Irra, Co. Sligo by Stefan Bergh. One of the passage tombs in the Carrowmore cemetery dominates the picture with Knocknarea and Queen Maeve’s cairn in the background.

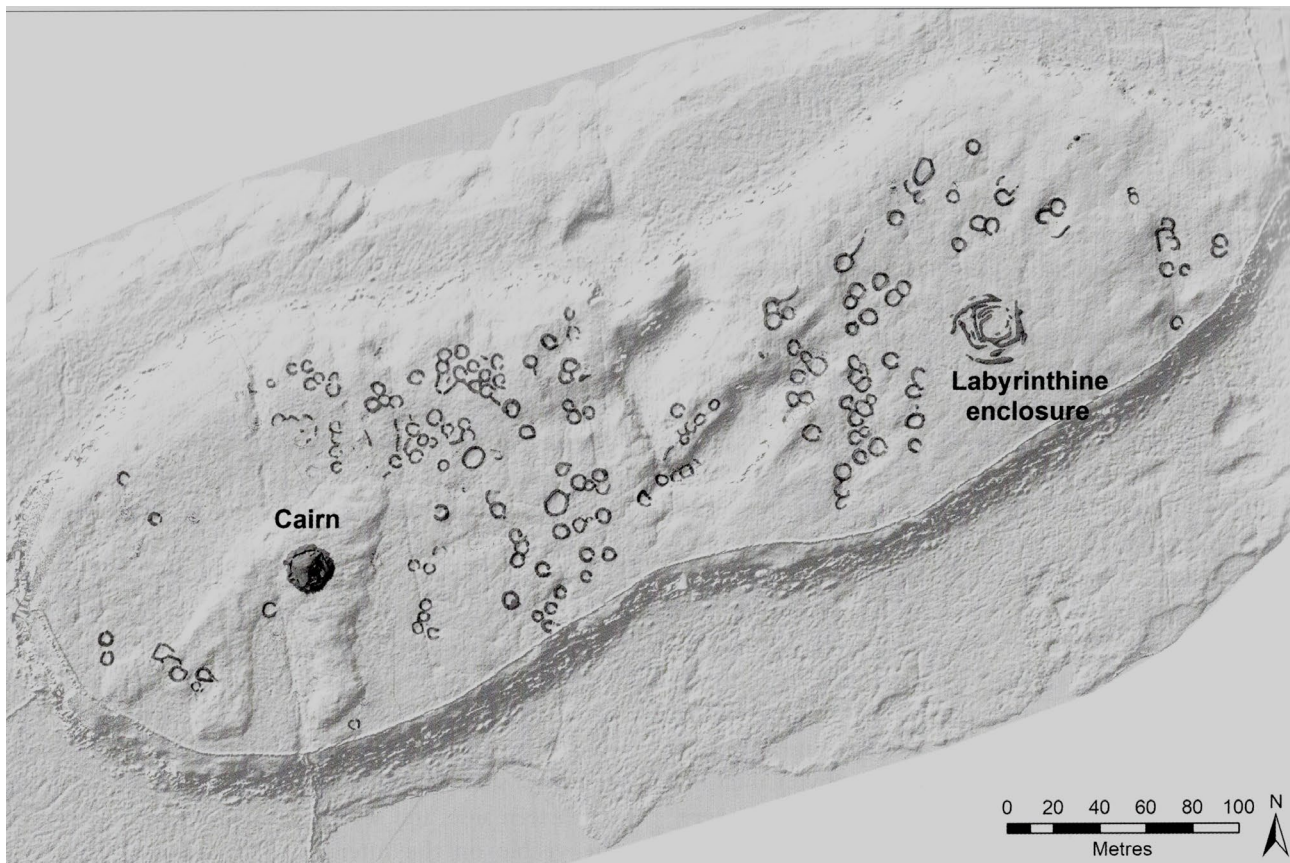
sites on these elevated places to around 1000 BC, he and graduates like Noel McCarthy and Ros Ó Maoldúin have made an important contribution to prehistoric settlement studies. Ros Ó Maoldúin’s PhD in 2014 was on *Exchange in Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age (EBA) Ireland*. Noel McCarthy completed a PhD on *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Slieve Gamph* in 2010.

Ground survey and the use of aerial drone technology by Paul Naessens on Turlough Hill has identified some 140 small circular structures on part of the summit. These and other monuments indicate that this high place had some very special significance and may have a location for important communal gatherings.

In a major programme of radiocarbon dating of selected samples from a number of tombs in a celebrated passage tomb cemetery at Carrowmore, Co Sligo, Bergh resolved a long-standing controversy over the dating of these monuments. This was done in collaboration with Robert Hensey, now an Adjunct Lecturer in Archaeology, whose PhD in 2010 was on *Ritual and Belief in the Passage Tomb Tradition of Ireland*.

At this time too Andrew Whitefield gained a PhD in 2015 for a thesis entitled *Sustainable Change: Settlement, Environment and the Temporality of Neolithic Western Ireland*. Here and in subsequent publications, to





The results of an aerial survey of a remarkable complex of features on Turlough Hill.

the consternation of some, he challenged the early dating of the celebrated Céide Fields in Co. Mayo.

Stefan Bergh has also played an important role in a bid to have Sligo's passage tomb landscapes awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. A major survey of these monuments and their dramatic landscape locations was completed in 2021 as *A Baseline Survey of the Passage Tombs of County Sligo 2021*. There are over ninety such monuments in the county and in addition to those on Knocknarea and in Carrowmore other tombs are located at Carrowkeel on the Bricklieve Mountains, on the summits of Cairns Hill just south of Sligo town, on Slieve Daeane, and on the Ballygawley Mountains to the south-east. Again aerial drone photography by Paul Naessens was an important component of this work.

Knocknarea is just the best known of these. As Stefan Bergh has written, mountains or high ground have always had a special role as significant spaces. They are often seen as being the home of the gods, the centre of the spiritual world, or the dwelling place of ancestors or mythical figures. What makes a mountain a universal religious vehicle in many different societies is their symbolic capacity to unite earth with heaven, and to bridge the gap between the mundane living world and the otherworld.



*A Baseline Survey of the Passage Tombs of County Sligo 2021* by Stefan Bergh, Fíona Gallagher, Robert Hensey and Pádraig Meehan. Two of the mountain-top cairns at Carrowkeel are visible.

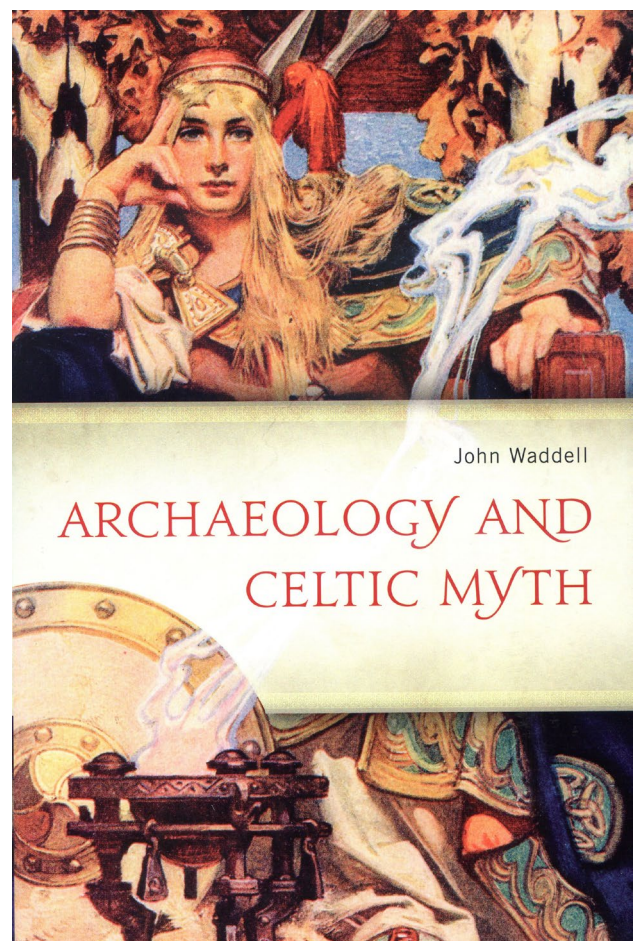




Queen Maeve's cairn on the summit of Knocknarea—a dramatic aerial view of this celebrated monument by Paul Naessens.

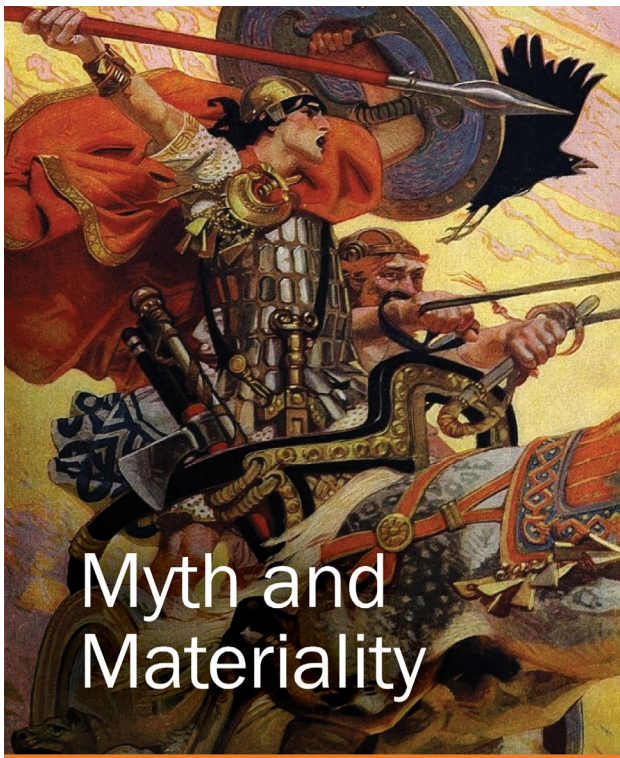
John Waddell, as an emeritus professor, was generously given access to all the facilities in Archaeology, and liberated from administrative and teaching duties had time to pursue various research interests. He was invited to give the Rhind Lectures in Edinburgh in 2014 and these were published as *Archaeology and Celtic Myth* in the same year. This was a work, inspired by studies at Rathcroghan, that explored the possibility that elements of pre-Christian Celtic myth preserved in medieval Irish literature might shed light on older traditions and beliefs not just in Ireland but elsewhere in Europe as well. The notion that myth might illuminate archaeology and that on occasion archaeology may shed light on myth was pursued further in *Myth and Materiality* in 2018. *Archaeology and Celtic Myth* was translated into French (with Marie Le Men) and published as *l'Archéologie et la Mythologie Celtique* in 2022 by Sidestone Press in Leiden.

A long overdue revised edition of *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Ireland* appeared in 2022. It incorporated references to the many discoveries made in the preceding period of unprecedented economic growth c. 1997-2008. There were some 214 archaeological excavations in 1993 and no less than 2044 a mere ten years later in 2003. The digital 'open science' revolution and the ease of access it provides to a wide range of material is a noteworthy feature of this new edition in which some 75% of the material referenced in the extensive bibliography is accessible in digital form.



*Archaeology and Celtic Myth* by John Waddell. The cover image of Queen Maeve is by the American illustrator J.C. Leyendecker for an article in *The Century Magazine* on the Irish sagas by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907.





John Waddell



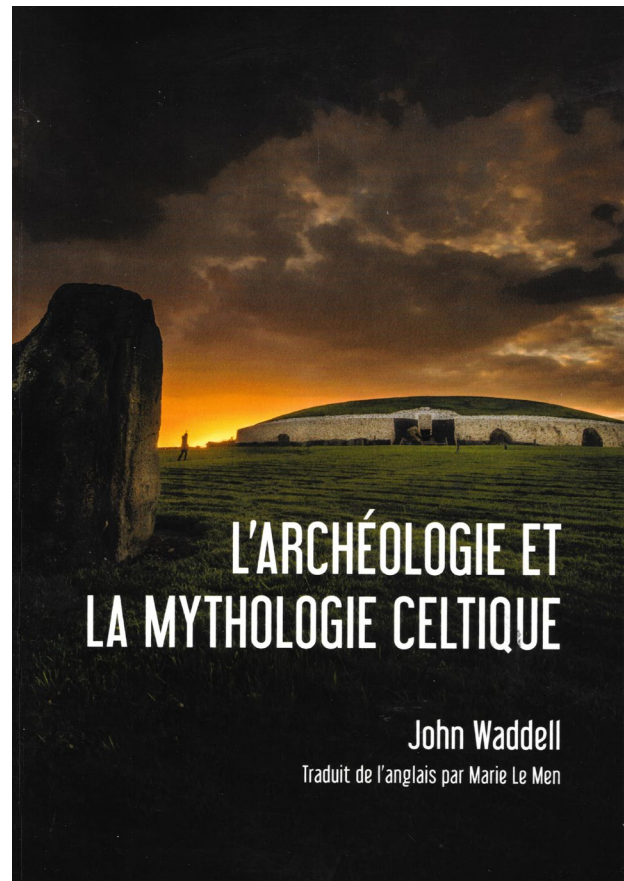
OXBOW INSIGHTS IN ARCHAEOLOGY

John Waddell's *Myth and Materiality* has Cú Chulainn on the cover also by J.C. Leyendecker.

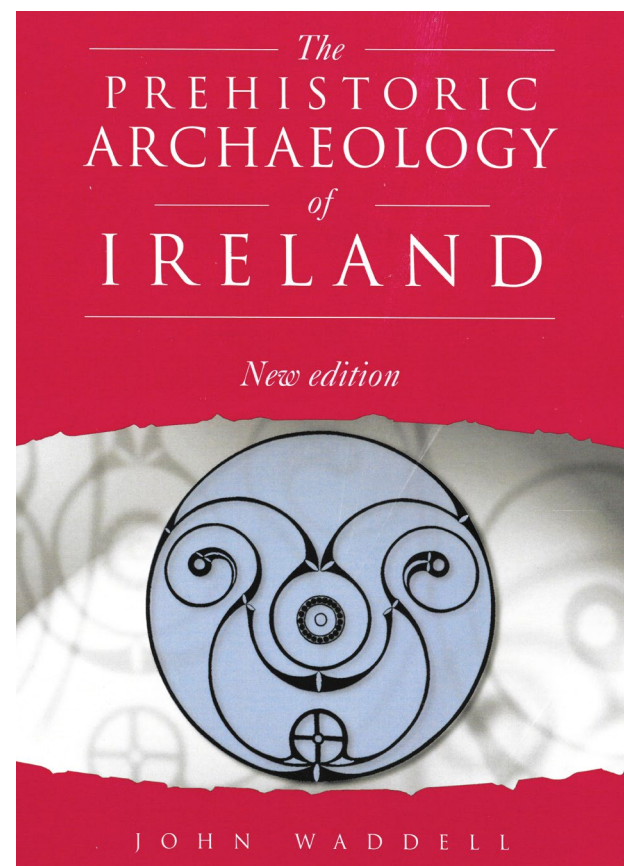
His book *Pagan Ireland. Ritual and belief in another world* was published in 2023. Written for a general readership, it is a wide-ranging study that draws on archaeological and cultural evidence to explore the difficult question of what beliefs might lie behind certain ritual practices detected in the archaeological record.

Kieran O'Connor was the principal author of a comprehensive study of Moygara Castle also published in 2023. This castle in Co. Sligo with its four towers, gatehouse and curtain walls is one of the most striking stone monuments in north Connacht. The volume, *Moygara Castle, County Sligo and the O'Garas of Coolavin*, contains an impressively wide range of studies on its history, archaeology, architecture and genealogy. Limited excavation also added substantially to an understanding of the site's use and chronology. Moygara now joins a relatively short list of Irish castles to have been the subject of an all-inclusive multi-disciplinary investigation.

The archaeological record, in all its complexity and diversity, has now been the subject of sustained enquiry in the University in Galway for the best part of a century.

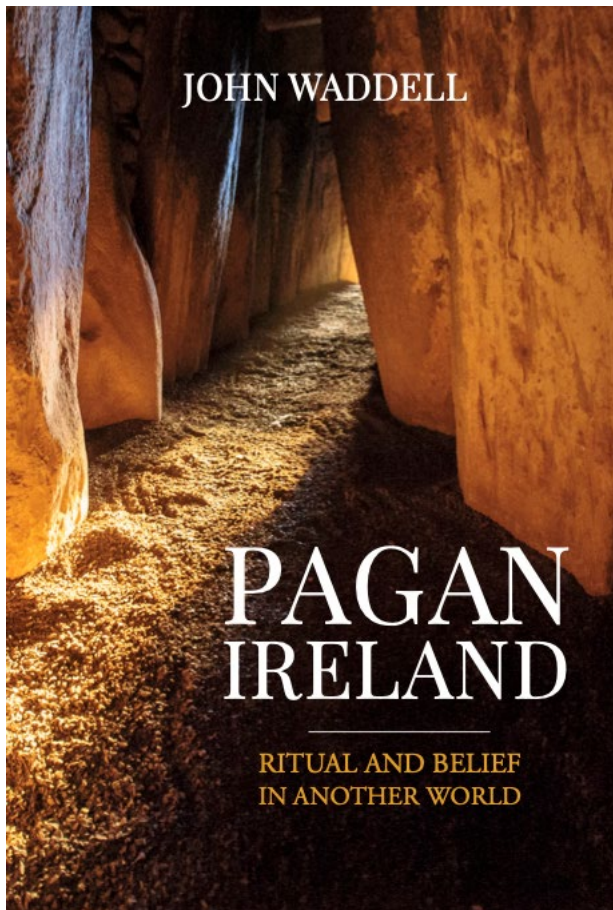


*L'archéologie et la mythologie celtique* published in 2022. The cover image is a photograph of Newgrange at sunset.

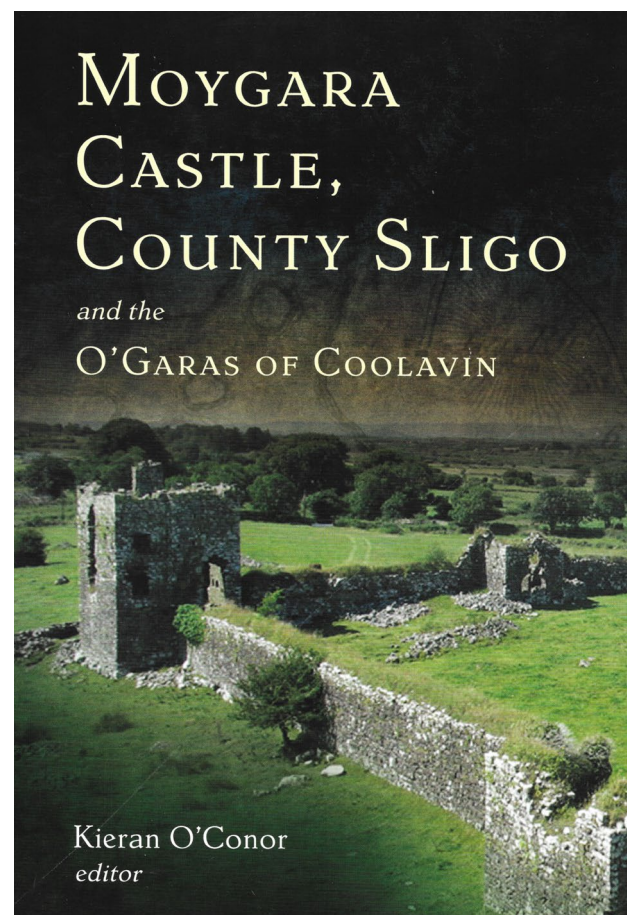


A new edition of *The Prehistoric Archaeology of Ireland* appeared in 2022.





*Pagan Ireland* by John Waddell. The photograph on the cover is of the winter solstice sun penetrating the chamber at Newgrange.



Kieran O'Connor's *Moygara Castle, County Sligo and the O'Garas of Coolavin* published in 2023.

All who have worked in this field have appreciated that archaeology has an international dimension and the capacity to illuminate aspects of our common humanity. It reveals a past that informs the present.

In their engagement with students and with local communities they have understood that those who know and engage with their archaeological heritage find an awareness of a shared identity, of inclusion and belonging, and a degree of connectiveness to the past. The cultural value of the archaeological environment is now widely understood.









A photograph of prehistoric Carn Seefin on the summit of Keeraunnageeragh Mountain in Derroua overlooking Lough Corrib north-west of Oughterard.