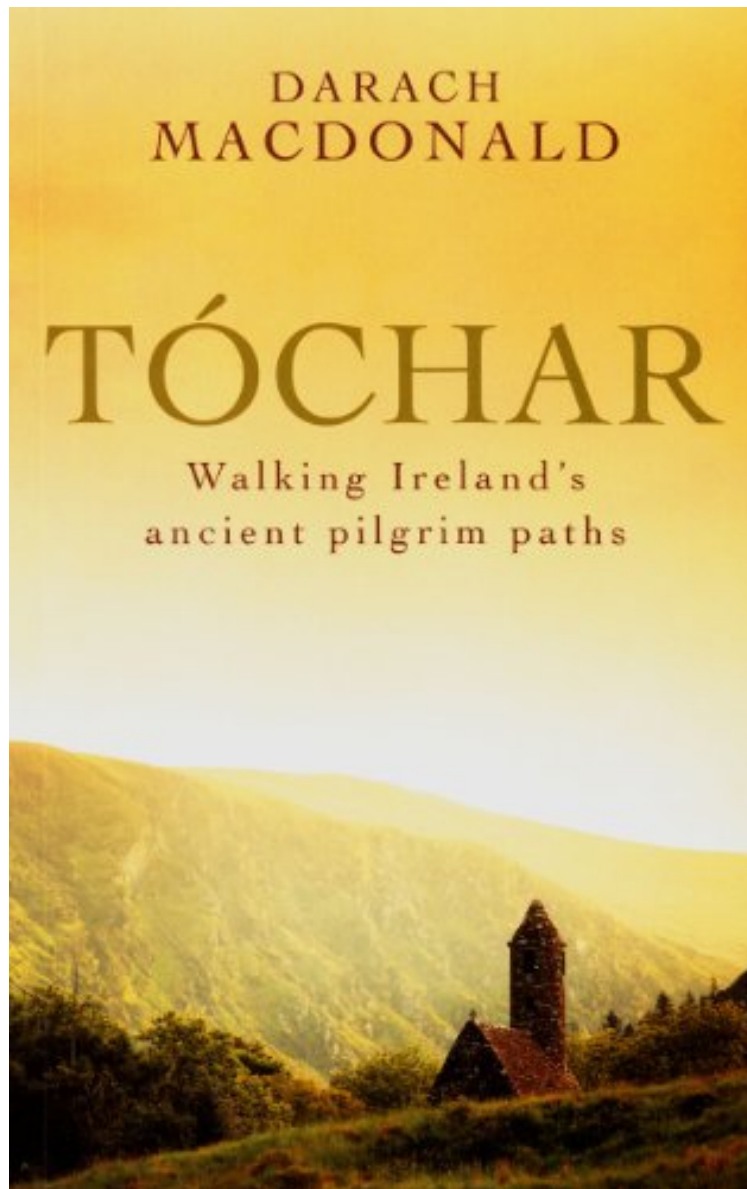


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Tochar: Walking Ireland's ancient pilgrim paths

Darach MacDonald

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Darach MacDonald : Tochar: Walking Ireland's ancient pilgrim paths before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tochar: Walking Ireland's ancient pilgrim paths:

Tochar ('Causeway') is a walking-pace travelogue through the country that was dubbed 'the Island of Saints and

Scholars' long before the Celtic Tiger took up residence. Set against the backdrop of spectacular scenery in every corner of Ireland, the book recounts the trials and tribulations of a modern-day pilgrim, who follows in the footsteps of the ancients along prescribed paths, which range from hikes of a few hours' duration to day-long treks, and the three-day ordeal in St. Patrick's Purgatory. This is a guide to the magical soul of Celtic Christianity, written from the perspective of a struggling 'a la carte' Irish Catholic, who could best be described as 'a healthy skeptic in matters of belief.' The result is a narrative that is at times uplifting and at times uncomfortable, but which is always engaging and honest. While there are pilgrimage prayers along the Tochar, as well as historical background on the places once revered throughout Christendom, there are also pints in pleasant pubs, a rich diversity of literary references, anecdotes, and personal reflections on faith, morality, and religious practice, which are offered in a spontaneous and unselfconscious spirit.