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Autore	Mallory J. P.
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Nota di contenuto	Discovering the oldest Irish tradition -- Impossible stories and impertinent tales -- Excavating the dreamtime -- The archaeology of the Irish National origin legend -- The natural environment -- The built environment -- Warfare and weapons -- Transport -- Material culture -- Burial -- Whence the dreamtime?
Sommario/riassunto	Tracing their roots back to nearly 3000 BC, the medieval Irish claimed an ancestry older than that of any other people in Europe. In their manuscripts they recorded the shaping of their island, the reigns of their kings and the deeds of their heroes. They clung to this account of their past in the face of foreign invasion and colonization, and drew upon it whenever they felt the need to emphasize their ancient heroic pedigree. Even when more skeptical attitudes challenged the veracity of their earliest traditional history, the epic tales were still seen as relics of a prehistoric society, a window on the Iron Age, preserving the earliest vernacular literature in Europe in their accounts of King Conchobar, Queen Medb and Ireland's greatest warrior, Cu Chulainn. In Search of the Irish Dreamtime explores the oldest Irish mythological tradition - Ireland's "Dreamtime" - from the perspective of archaeology. Was this narrative built from largely native accounts of Ireland's prehistoric past, transmitted orally over many generations, or was it primarily the product of an educated medieval class who blended the cultural landscape of their own times with descriptions from the Bible and Latin

literature to create an imagined ancient Irish world? Delving into the linguistic evidence of the early tales and native histories, which relate the natural environment, built environment (focusing particularly on forts and provincial capitals) and economy of ancient Ireland, Mallory expertly tests the medieval writings against the archaeology on the ground. He compares the literary depictions of ancient material culture - clothing, weaponry, modes of transport - and traditions of burial with the archaeological record of the Bronze Age through to the Middle Ages, reaching a provocative new understanding of the early history of Ireland. -- from dust jacket.

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