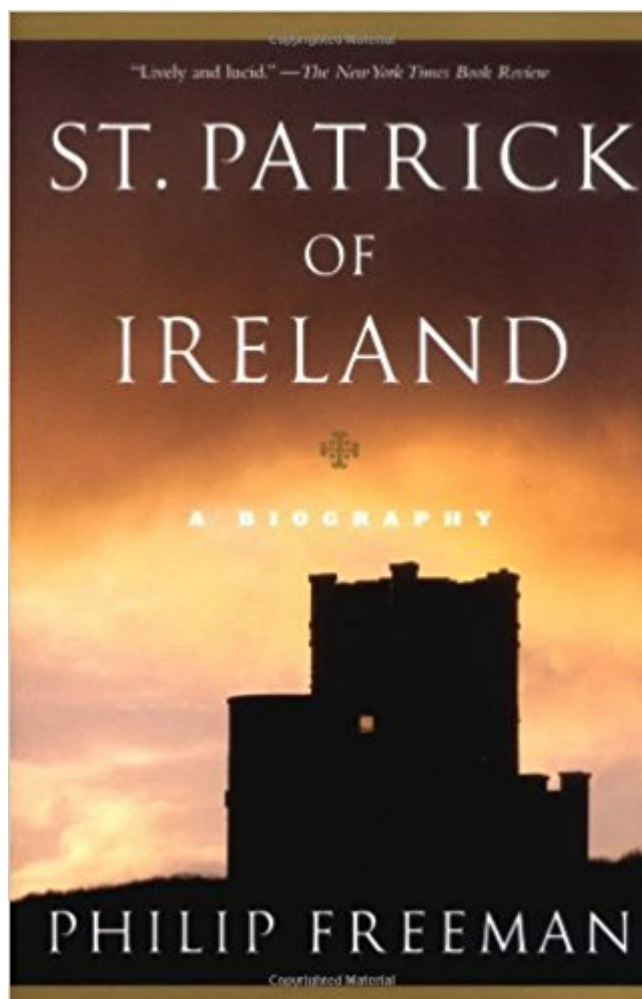


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# St. Patrick Of Ireland: A Biography



## Synopsis

Ireland's patron saint has long been shrouded in legend, but the true story of St. Patrick is far more inspiring than the myths. In *St. Patrick of Ireland*, Philip Freeman brings the historic Patrick and his world vividly to life. Patrick speaks in his own voice in two remarkable letters he wrote about himself and his beliefs, new translations of which are included here and which are still astonishing for their passion and eloquence. Born late in the fourth century to an aristocratic British family, Patrick's life was changed forever when he was abducted and taken to Ireland just before his sixteenth birthday. He spent six grueling years there as a slave, but the ordeal turned him from an atheist into a true believer. After a vision in which God told him he would go home, Patrick escaped captivity and, following a perilous journey, returned safely to Britain to the amazement of his family. But even more amazing to them was his announcement that he intended to go back to Ireland to spend the rest of his life ministering to the people who had once enslaved him. Set against the turbulent backdrop of the British Isles during the last years of the Roman Empire, *St. Patrick of Ireland* brilliantly brings to life the real Patrick, shorn of legend, a man whose deep spiritual conviction and devotion helped to transform a country.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Having read other, classic studies on Patrick, I wasn't expecting much from this book. But I must admit that I was pleasantly surprised. Philip Freeman's "St. Patrick of Ireland" is a well-researched, scholarly, yet very readable book. While there is little new information in the book, for readers who wish to know something about St. Patrick but don't care to go in-depth, this work should serve

adequately. The book should also serve as a good introduction to readers who wish to proceed to more in-depth scholarly works such as the late R. P. C. Hanson's, J. B. Bury's or other more studies. Instead of concentrating on the vexing questions of dates, chronology, Patrick's missing years, and other intriguing though problematical issues in Patrician studies, Freeman concentrates on what is definitely known of Patrick's life and career, giving little space to speculation. He does a particularly good job of setting Patrick in the context of his times, describing fourth-century Romano-British and Irish society and religion. Freeman also includes his own translations of Patrick's only two surviving works, the "Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus," and the "Confession." The maps of Britain and Ireland and the black-and-white photos at the beginning of each section are a nice change from other books on Patrick, and the book has a handsome dust jacket. The time line at the back of the book was convenient and helpful, as was the pronunciation guide for Celtic words. One wishes more works on Celtic history/theology provided pronunciation guides. The book also contains an index and a list of suggested readings for each chapter. In "St. Patrick of Ireland" Philip Freeman does a very good job of presenting the life, career and writing of this mysterious and humble man of God. As St.

There certainly is a very large amount of information packed into a very small book (by comparison) here. This is an excellent work for those who have been curious, or are curious, about this famous Irish Saint, yet who are not so curious that they want to dig through a mind numbing academic work which would be better than xanax to provide a good nap. I am one of those people and I am one who greatly appreciated this work. In other areas of history, yes, I want something more in depth, but not on this particular subject. It is written in a scholarly manner, appears to be very well researched, yet I found not one page that I did not learn something from nor one page that caused my eyes to roll back into my head and wish the author would just get on with it. It was a good and informative read. I certainly am not going to rewrite the entire work in this form and call it a review. That has already been done. For greater detail refer to one of the well done and very in depth reviews already posted here. What I found most interesting about the book was the author's ability to paint a very vivid picture of the cultural and religious clash that took place in Ireland during St. Patrick's time. I enjoyed the brief look at the state of the Christian Church at that time and how it affected the people of that time. That story, to me, was just as fascinating as the one told by the author of the Great Saint himself. The brief look at the Celtic religious practices and beliefs was excellent. I also appreciated the author's ability to separate fact from all the fiction that has been dished out for years and years and do it in a nonoffensive way. This was quite refreshing. The

author is quite careful to note fact from fiction, speculation from written and archeological fact.

Although the holiday bearing his name has become associated with legend and myth, St. Patrick, the man, lived such a life that warrants admiration and commendation from Christians everywhere. The man behind the myths exemplifies the Christian life of sacrifice, reliance on God, love and passion for souls, and unfoundering hope in eternal life through Jesus Christ. Philip Freeman's book *St. Patrick of Ireland* presents the life and times of St. Patrick. Patrick's story is inspiring and astonishing. It reads like an addition to the Book of Acts in the Bible. Patrick was born in Britain in the late fourth century to an aristocratic family. Irish marauders kidnapped him from his home when he was 15 years old and took him as a slave to Ireland. He labored endlessly for six years before escaping and returning to Britain and his family. Patrick had atheistic beliefs when kidnapped, but during the course of his slavery he was transformed into a devout Christian, burning with love for Christ. After several years of religious study, Patrick willingly journeyed back to Ireland on a mission to share the message of salvation with a godless people known for their barbarianism and paganism which he had experienced first hand. Freeman tells the story of Patrick's life from information garnered from the two writings left by Patrick. These are two letters Patrick wrote from Ireland to Britain that relate significant events of his ministry and life in simple, honest language. Freeman also references other historical texts and archeological discoveries to explain the culture of Patrick's world. Freeman displays his expertise in Irish history by offering the reader a comprehensive picture of the cultures in which Patrick lived.

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