



The History and Topography of Ireland (Penguin Classics)

Gerald of Wales

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Gerald of Wales was among the most dynamic and fascinating churchmen of the twelfth century. A member of one of the leading Norman families involved in the invasion of Ireland, he first visited there in 1183 and later returned in the entourage of Henry II. The resulting *Topographia Hiberniae* is an extraordinary account of his travels. Here he describes landscapes, fish, birds and animals; recounts the history of Ireland's rulers; and tells fantastical stories of magic wells and deadly whirlpools, strange creatures and evil spirits. Written from the point of view of an invader and reformer, this work has been rightly criticized for its portrait of a primitive land, yet it is also one of the most important sources for what is known of Ireland during the Middle Ages.

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