

CORR SCÉAL — CRANE NOTIONS

A NEW MYTH OR A FORGOTTEN LEGEND?

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The **Eurasian Crane** (Latin: *Grus grus*) is a bird species that once bred across Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. It became extinct across these islands around 1540-1600 AD, in late medieval times.

- Cranes were the third most common **domestic pet** in ancient Ireland.
- Cranes are the second most common bird mentioned in English **placenames**.
- Crane bones are the fourth most common species of bird bone in the Irish **archaeological record**.

Searching for *Eo Chair*, the ‘Crane Wisdom’ of the Atlantic Islands Suggesting a key (*Eochair*) to our past

Cranes had an elevated cultural importance in ancient China, India, Egypt and Greece, where references to Cranes described them variously as ‘Birds of Heaven,’ ‘Immortal Bird’ and ‘The Magic of the Cranes.’

Enormous flocks of Cranes were a conspicuous feature of the inhabited world after the last ice age as well as throughout the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods and Bronze and Iron Ages.

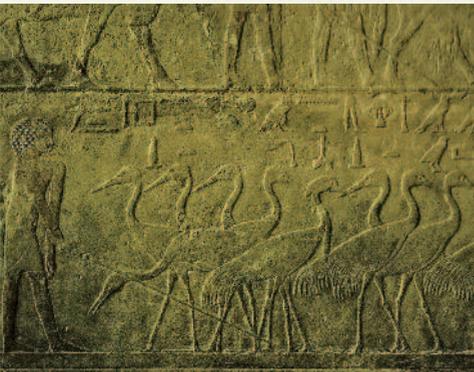
So, has the Crane left cultural footprints in our Atlantic Islands? And where should we look for these possible or hidden societal influences?

After eight years of delving into the cultural remnants of a once-totemic Crane, author **Lorcán Ó Tuathail** presents twelve speculative

storylines that shine light on a cornerstone of a forgotten and ancient Atlantic civilisation. Reaching into archaeology, language, animist beliefs and the dawning of knowledge, Ó Tuathail reframes the Crane story and calls for academic inquiry into its significance. As doubts are cast on some histories from the humanist and classical empires, Ó Tuathail believes it is time to look past the text of the victors and embrace the views of the vanquished, the pacifists and their forgotten, often belittled cultures and histories.



Crane
(Micheál Casey)



Pet Cranes carved on a tombstone from Ancient Egypt.

Corr Scéal – Crane Notions takes a thought-provoking look at twelve enigmatic aspects of the Crane in our cultural history. Here are brief sketches of Ó Tuathail's twelve essays:

1 The Aran Islands

- The Aran Islands, Co Galway, is the site of a magnificent prehistoric stone temple, Dún Aongus, located on the edge of a 300-foot-high sea cliff. Why was this location chosen?
- Why was the ancient spiritual leader of the Aran Islands called Corbán ('White Crane')? And why was the first Christian settler on Aran called Naomh Éanna, meaning 'Saint of the Birds'?
- Why was there so much tree removal on the Aran Islands? Was it caused by fuelling fires lit to provide a lighthouse for 'celestial' navigators?

2 The 'White Crane' Symbol

- Was the 'White Crane' the totemic symbol of early Atlantic animist tribes who venerated the memory of their ancestors long before the arrival of Continental Celts?
- The Celtic tradition suggests Lúgh (the Celtic Sun God) defeated Balor at the dawn of the Iron Age. What was the Neolithic or Bronze Age belief system of Balor?
- Why did Chaucer once write that he dreamt of 20,000 friars flying out of the bottom of the devil, like a swarm of bees?

3 The Coelbren Alphabet

- Ancient letter systems were once carved in wood; their letters were entirely angular and linear in order to facilitate wood carving.
- It is suggested that carved letters were used in Britain before the Romans arrived. If true, this would undermine accounts of native illiteracy.
- Why are the Welsh authorities so reluctant to admit that Welsh poets are repeatedly documented using the carved Coelbren alphabet in the 15th and 16th centuries?

4 Megaliths

- Where did the great, long-lost flocks of Atlantic Cranes gather on their ancient migratory routes? Where were their staging (resting) posts?
- If migrating Cranes transported the spirits of the dead to the afterlife, as some believed, could human remains have been left near the Crane flocks bound for heaven?
- Archaeologists wonder if early fishermen followed fish shoals and helped spread megalithic rock art symbolism. Is following Crane migrations such an odd idea from an Animist perspective?



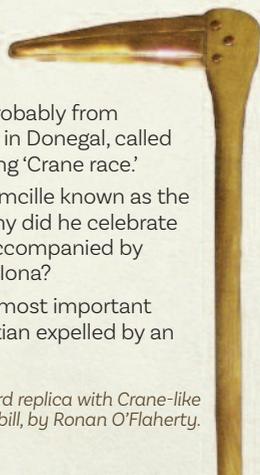
An 8th-century High Cross in Ahenny, Co Tipperary, has images of Cranes on its base.

5 Poetry

- Why do the enigmatic themes of poetry in Old Irish scripts, and later poems written by Shakespeare and Keats, remain to this day despite centuries of literary reviews?
- Are the poetical references to 'the Phoenix,' 'the Immortal Bird' and 'An Pangur Bán' alluding to the ancient reverence for spiritual Cranes?
- Why did the ancient Chief Poets of Welsh and Irish tribes wear cloaks made of bird feathers to symbolise their elevated status, as the manuscript records suggest?

6 Saint Colmcille (Saint Columba)

- Saint Colmcille's mother Eithne was probably from a totemic Crane tribe in Donegal, called the 'Cortraige,' meaning 'Crane race.'
- Why was Saint Colmcille known as the 'Crane Cleric'? And why did he celebrate his mass or service accompanied by Cranes on his altar in Iona?
- Why was Ireland's most important Irish-born Early Christian expelled by an Irish Church synod?



Bronze Age halberd replica with Crane-like head and bill, by Ronan O'Flaherty.



Part of the Wilton Diptych, a portable altarpiece used by King Richard II and painted in 1395-1399 AD. The angels' wings are the same as Cranes' wings.

7 Newgrange

- The Boyne Valley contains a large percentage of Europe's earliest rock art symbolism, especially chevrons or 'V' shapes. High-flying Crane flocks were a very conspicuous 'V' in megalithic skies.
- Is it likely Newgrange was a site for burial and reincarnation simultaneously, as the possible 'birthing canal' layout and 'bird's-nest' basin stones in the end chambers hint?
- Is the frequency of debatable and distorted local Crane placenames in the vicinity of this tomb real or imaginary?

8 Numbers

- Did the common Irish-language phrase 'corr uimhir' once signify 'Crane numbers' rather than its current interpretation as 'odd numbers'?
- Could the trigonometry of Greek philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras be based on a much older mathematical school based on an animist system utilising the triangular outline of a Crane's footprint?
- The psychoanalyst Dr Carl Jung believed numbers were 'discovered' rather than invented by human 'cognition.' Are there signs that ancient societies believed in the divinity of numbers?

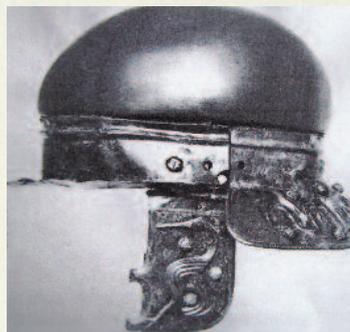
9 Táin Bó Cuailgne

- Should the three remaining manuscripts containing Ireland's saga, the *Táin*, and their multitude of ink alterations be subjected to spectrometry to uncover the original words?
- Why is there a solid argument that the landscape and physical features of the *Táin* fit the Wicklow Mountains better than the Cooley Peninsula in County Louth?
- Have scribes falsely created the word 'carpat' (chariots) in the *Táin* by ink alterations? And have references to wrist guards, used by Beaker folk, been overlooked by the experts?

10 Ancient Eastern Philosophy

- If there really was an ancient school of pacifist wisdom, based on Cranes, in Asia, did it spread to the West or could it have come from the West?
- Is it possible that pre-Judaic, pre-Christian and pre-Islamic beliefs all shared a rather loose outlook or customs based on Crane teachings as espoused by Solomon's missionaries?
- Where does the ancient veneration for Cranes amongst Hindus, Chinese, Japanese, Buddhists and Taoists stem from? Did they all grow from a Mesolithic Crane totemism?

Crane bone from Lagore Royal Crannóg, Ratoath, Co Meath, in the National Museum of Ireland - Natural History, Dublin.



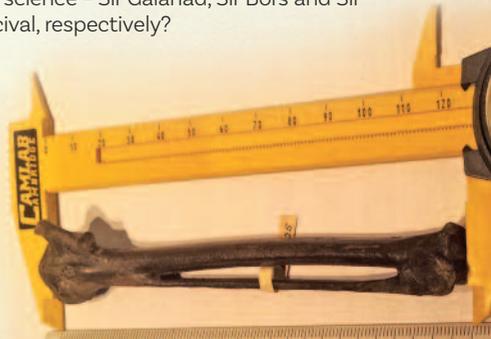
Balkan Celtic helmet from the first century BC with an engraved Crane on its fastening. An obsolete Irish word for helmet was Corchathbhar (note the 'Cor').

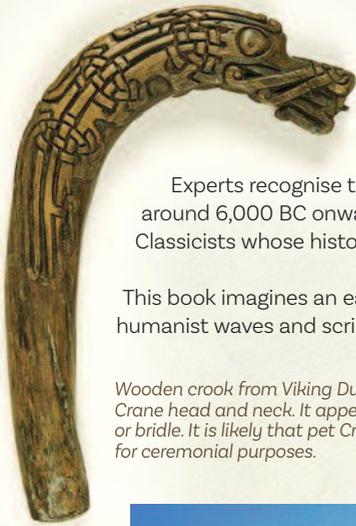
11 Ancient European Word Roots

- Why is there so much academic debate and confusion regarding the languages used in these islands before the arrival of the La Tène Celts and the Roman Army during the Iron Age?
- Where did all the pre-Roman English go after the Roman invasion? Did their dominant language patterns leave little influence on the English language, as the Oxford English Dictionary suggests?
- Why do ancient Welsh and Irish languages start sentences with verbs (energy, actions or motivation), like Semitic languages, unlike subsequent proto-Indo-European languages?

12 The Tales of King Arthur

- Why do the Tales of King Arthur emphasise a belief in reincarnation, from the mythical island of Aivilon, so emphatically? Was it an echo of a belief that people were buried along Crane migration routes ('Avi-lines') or corridors in the pre-Roman past?
- Should we automatically assume that references to King Solomon in these tales are a simple 'biblical borrowing'? Is that an uncontested fact or is it merely an opinion based on numerous ink references written centuries after the first oral composition of these tales?
- Is the 'Holy Grail' (Crane Wisdom!) a garbled account of a forgotten British quest for knowledge at the onset of literacy, mathematics and science - Sir Galahad, Sir Bors and Sir Percival, respectively?





This book explores our animist past and beliefs and queries the classical interpretation of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age cultures. It points to an ancient meeting of minds between pacifist cultures before population growth led to competition and resource wars.

Experts recognise the explosion of knowledge and reflection that occurred from around 6,000 BC onwards, but too often they fail to challenge the received opinion of Classicists whose histories speak of 'civilised' invaders conquering 'barbaric' societies.

This book imagines an earlier pacifist, animist Atlantic civilisation that was drowned out by humanist waves and scribal ink.

Wooden crook from Viking Dublin shaped like Crane head and neck. It appears to have a leash or bridle. It is likely that pet Cranes were leashed for ceremonial purposes.



Cranes on migration flying in 'V' formation.

Detail from the Phaistos Disc from Minoan Crete (second millennium BC). The bird appears to have a message attached to its leg - as a symbol, at least. Like the Crane Angels, it may be the prayer flag of a heavenly Crane.

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