



The Taking of Ireland

Invasion? or coming home and learning how to connect with
the land and her peoples?

By - An Scéalaí Beag



Overview of Today's Presentation

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An image of a corridor between library shelves full of books

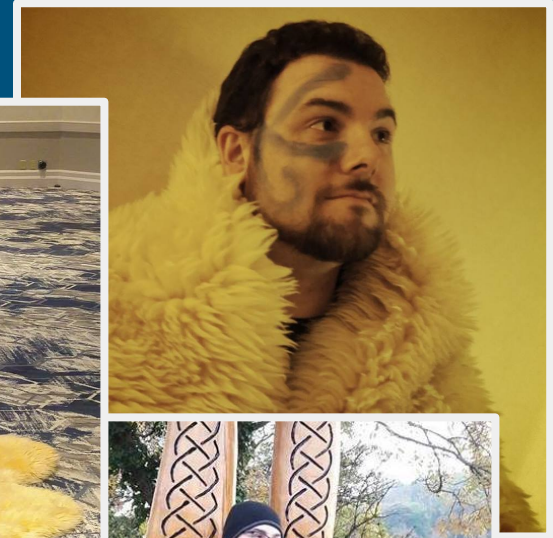
About Me

Writer and Storyteller

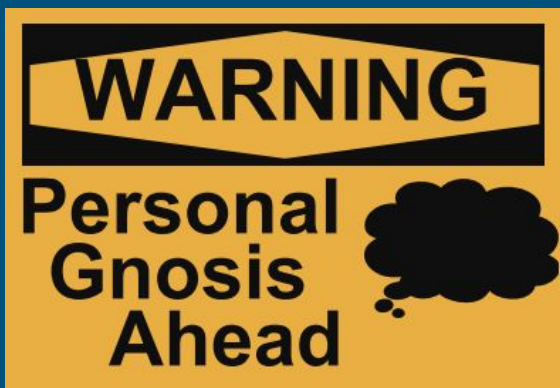
Presenter and event host

**Tour guide and bard throne
usurper**

"It's not always easy to find the words... but when you find the right ones,
you can change hearts and minds." - An Scéalaí Beag



Notes from the Presenter: A Matter of Bias and Perspective.



The Battle of Moytura
or, The First Battle of Magh Turedh

Lebor Gabála Érenn
The Book of the Takings of Ireland
The Book of Invasions

Lebor Gabála Érenn: The Book
of Invasions
§55-64: The Tuatha de Dannan

Sources: <http://www.ancienttexts.org> www.UCC.ie/celt



Tuatha Dé Danann - The gods of
Ireland.

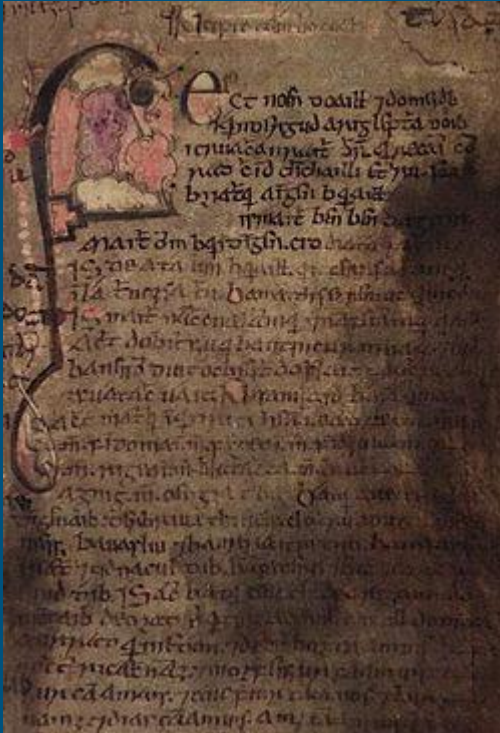
**Lebor Gabála Érenn: The
Book of Invasions**
§65-95: The Milesians

Section 1.

The Order of Invasions

In this section we will look at the recorded returns to Ireland and set our scene for the Return of the Tuatha de Danann.

Lebor Gabála Éirenn - The Book of Invasions



The oldest written record of Ireland's ancient past (*Book of Leinster, Book of Fermoy, Yellow Book of Lecan*)

1. Cessairians
2. Partholonians
3. Nemedians
4. *Fir Bolgs (The Galioin, The Fir Bolg and the Fir Domnann)*
5. *Tuatha De Dannan*
6. *The Milesians*

We will take a look at the later arrivals and how the interactions may give us insight on our own relationship with the Tribes.

The Fir Bolg - A Foreboding

Slavery was imposed upon them by the Greeks; they had to carry clay upon rough mountains so that they became flowery plains. Thereafter they were weary of their servitude, and they went in flight, ... Thereafter they came again into Ireland, their land of origin

Lebor Gabála Éirenn: Book of the Taking of Ireland. vol. 4. ed. and tr. by R. A. S. Macalister. Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1941.



An Image of Ireland as seen from space.

The Fir Bolg - A Foreboding

'I saw a great flock of black birds,' said the king, 'coming from the depths of the Ocean. They settled over all of us, and fought with the people of Ireland. They brought confusion on us, and destroyed us. One of us, methought, struck the noblest of the birds and cut off one of its wings. And now, Cesard, employ your skill and knowledge, and tell us the meaning of the vision.'

Cesard did so, and by means of ritual and the use of his science the meaning of the king's vision was revealed to him; and he said: 'I have tidings for you: warriors are coming across the sea, a thousand heroes covering the ocean; speckled ships will press in upon us; all kinds of death they announce, a people skilled in every art, a magic spell; an evil spirit will come upon you, signs to lead you astray . . . they will be victorious in every stress.'

'That,' said Eochaid, 'is a prophecy of the coming to Ireland of enemies from far distant countries.'

SOURCE: Fraser, J. "The First Battle of Moytura." *Ériu* v.8 (1915), pp. 1-63 [H 2.17]

The Fir Bolg - Summary

Take Away Points

- Descendants of Nemed they were once of Ireland but had emigrated to escape Fomorian oppression.
- The tribe are said to have made it to Greece where they are said to have 'shaped rough lands into paradises' only to be moved again and again by the local rulers.
- To again escape oppression they took their bags and made them into boats to return to Ireland.
- Their return to Ireland was not met with any opposition and they set up their kingdoms and ruled from Tara.
- The coming of the TDD was foretold by the dreams of the king and that they would come with or as masters of great skills.

Commentary:

Immigration of the descendants of a tribe who once emigrated.

Having fled oppression ended up in a position of being oppressed and taken advantage of again.

Their return is not just about getting back to Ireland, it's about getting to a place of freedom and self actualisation through control of their own land and destiny.

It might be fair to say that they would fear the arrival of anything that might threaten that.

Section 2.

The Tuatha de Danann

In this section we will look at some specific recorded actions of the Tuatha de Danann on their taking of Ireland.

The Tuatha de Dannan - Home Coming

As for the Tuatha De Danann, they all arrived in Ireland, and immediately broke and burnt all their ships and boats.....And at last their hearts and minds were filled with contentment that they had attained to the land of their ancestors.

The Tuatha De saw a huge fearsome man approaching them.....Then Bres, son of Elatha, went out from the camp to inspect him and parley with him {Sreng}Then they greeted each other, for they spoke the same language—their origin being the same—and explained to each other as follows who they and their ancestors were...

‘Go then,’ said Bres, ‘and here is one of the two spears I brought with me. Take it as a specimen of the weapons of the Tuatha De.’ Sreng gave one of his javelins to Bres as a specimen of the weapons of the Fir Bolg. ‘Tell the Fir Bolg,’ said Bres, ‘that they must give my people either battle or half of Ireland.’ ‘On my word,’ said Sreng, ‘I should prefer to give you half of Ireland than to face your weapons.’ They parted in peace after making a compact of friendship with each other.

It was then that Nuada proposed to the Tuatha De to send envoys to the Fir Boig: ‘They must surrender the half of Ireland, and we shall divide the land between us.’ ‘Who are to be our envoys?’ the people asked. ‘Our poets,...

The Tuatha de Dinnan - Home Coming

'This is why we are come,' they said, 'to request the dividing of the land between us, an equitable halving of Ireland.' 'Do the nobles of the Fir Bolg hear that?' said Eochaid. 'We do,' they replied, 'but we shall not grant their request till doomsday.' 'Then,' said the poets, 'when do you mean to give battle?'

'Some delay is called for,' said the Fir Bolg nobles, 'for we shall have to prepare our spears, to mend our mail, to shape our helmets, to sharpen our swords, and to make suitable attire,' There were brought to them men to arrange those things. 'Provide,' said they, 'shields for a tenth, swords for a fifth, and spears for a third part. You must each furnish what we require on either side.' 'We,' said the envoys of the Tuatha De to the Fir Bolg, 'shall have to make your spears, and you must make our javelins.' The Tuatha De were then given hospitality till that was done. So they arranged an armistice till the weapons arrived, till their equipment was ready, and they were prepared for battle.

Their druids went back to the Tuatha De and told their story from beginning to end, how the Fir Bolg would not share the land with them, and refused them favour or friendship. The news filled the Tuatha De with consternation.

Overtures of peace then become arrangement and battle, but even here there is much to learn.

The Tuatha de Dannan - The First Battle of Magh Turedh

By the close of the day the Tuatha De were defeated and returned to their camp. The Fir Bolg did not pursue them across the battlefield, but returned in good spirits to their own camp. They each brought with them into the presence of their king a stone and a head, and made a great cairn of them. The Tuatha De set up a stone pillar called the Pillar of Aidleo, after the first of them to be killed. Their physicians then assembled. The Fir Bolg too had their physicians brought to them. They brought healing herbs with them, and crushed and scattered them on the surface of the water in the well, so that the precious healing waters became thick and green. Their wounded were put into the well, and immediately came out whole.

When night fell the Fir Bolg were driven across the battlefield. However, they brought each a head and a stone to Eochaid their king. 'Is it you that have been beaten today?' said the king. 'Yes,' said Cirb; 'but that will not profit them.'

At last Cirb fell before the Dagda's battering blows.After the fall of Cirb the Fir Bolg were driven into their camp. The Tuatha De did not pursue them across the battlefield, but they took with them a head and a stone pillar apiece including the head of Cirb, which was buried in the Cairn of Cirb's Head.

The Tuatha de Dannan - The First Battle of Magh Turedh

They considered what it was their interest to do, whether they should leave Ireland, or offer regular battle, or undertake to share the land with the Tuatha De. They decided to offer the Tuatha Dc battle, and Sreng said:

‘Resistance is destruction for men; we resolutely gave battle; there was clashing of hard swords; the strong plying of spears on the sides of noble warriors, and the breaking of buckler on shield; full of trouble are the plains of Ireland; disaster we found about its woods, the loss of many good men.’

It was then that Sreng challenged Nuada to single combat, as they had fought in the previous battle. Nuada faced him bravely and boldly as if he had been whole, and said: ‘If single combat on fair terms be what you seek, fasten your right hand, as I have lost mine; only so can our combat be fair.’ ‘If you have lost your hand, that lays me under no obligations,’ said Sreng, ‘for our first combat was on fair terms. We ourselves so took up the quarrel.’

The Tuatha De took counsel, and their decision was to offer Sreng his choice of the provinces of Ireland, while a compact of peace, goodwill, and friendship should be made between the two peoples.

The Tuatha de Dannan - Summary

Take away points:

- Descendents of Nemed who left the island return to the land of their ancestors and, finding it occupied, request a share of the land for their tribe.
- They meet champion to champion, acknowledged shared language and bloodline and agreed the terms to avoid battle. The TdD tried to negotiate on more than one occasion
- They agree terms of battle when it comes to that, but only once both sides have exchanged sufficient technical knowledge so the battle is equal.
- Pursued battle, but not to eradicate each other, just to establish rulership of the island. Allowed time each day to cease conflict and tend to the wounded and bury the dead.
- When the TDD won the island, they gave some space to the Fir Bolg and integrated with them.

Commentary:

Out of the mists

meeting of champions & Agreement to battle

Moytura part 1 - the Homecoming

After Moytura

Ireland, the land of the Gods

Section 3.

The Sons of Mil

In this section we will look at some specific details regarding the Sons of Mil and their Invasion of Ireland.

The Sons of Míl - War of Vengeance

As for the Gaedil, we have given their ventures from Iafeth s. Noe onward, and from the Tower of Nemrod, till we have left them at Breogan's Tower in Spain... and we have further related how they took Spain by force.

Íth s. Breogan, [it is he] who saw Ireland at the first, on a winter's evening, from the top of Breogan's Tower; for thus is a man's vision best, on a clear winter's evening. Íth, wíth thrice thirty warriors, came to Ireland,

Then said Íth: Work just righteousness, for good is the land wherein ye dwell; plenteous its fruit, its honey, its wheat and its fish; moderate its heat and its cold.

So it was to avenge Íth that the sons of Míl [to wit, the Gáedil] came—for his [Íth's] body was carried to Spain.

Every time that the Sons of Míl came up with Ireland, the demons would frame that the port was, as it were, a hog's back; whence Ireland is called "Hog island". They skirted around Ireland three times, and landed at last in Inber Scéne.

At the end of three days and three nights thereafter the Sons of Míl broke the battle of Sliab Mis against demons and Fomoraig, that is, against the Túatha Dé Danann.

As he set his right foot upon Ireland, Amorgen Glúingel s. Míl spoke this poem—

I am Wind on Sea,
I am Ocean-wave,
I am Roar of Sea,
I am Bull of Seven Fights,
I am Vulture on Cliff,.....

Item Amorgen cecinit—

A fishful sea!
A fruitful land!.....

The Sons of Míl - The Name of the Land

The sons of Míl had colloquy with Banba in Sliab Mis. Said Banba unto them: If it be to take Ireland ye have come, not right were the good-fortune in which ye have come. It is by necessity, said Amorgen Glúingel, the poet. A gift from you to me then, said she. What gift? said they. That my name may be on this island, said she. What is thy name? said they. Banba, said she. Let it be a name for this island, said Amorgen.

They had colloquy with Ériu in Uisnech. She said unto them: Warriors, said she, welcome to you. Long have soothsayers had [knowledge of] your coming. Yours shall be this island for ever; and to the east of the world there shall not be a better island. No race shall there be, more numerous than yours. Good is that, said Amorgen; good is the prophecy.

Not right were it to thank her, said Éber Donn, eldest of the sons of Míl; thank our gods and our own might.

To thee 'tis equal, said Ériu; thou shalt have no profit of this island, nor shall thy progeny. A gift to me, ye sons of Míl, and ye children of Breogan, said she; that my name shall be on this island. It shall be its principal name, said Amorgen.

The Sons of Míl - War of Conquest

The three kings of Ireland, Mac Cuill, Mac Cécht, and Mac Gréine, were there. They pronounced judgement against the Sons of Míl, that they [themselves] should have the island to the end of three days, free from assault, from assembly of battle, or from giving of hostages; for they were assured that they (the invaders) would not return, *because druids would make spells behind them, so that they should not be able to come again.* We shall adjudge it, said Mac Cuill s. Cermat, as Amorgen your own judge shall pronounce to you; for if he should give a false judgement, he [aliter, you] would die at our hands. Give the judgement, Amorgen, said Eber Donn. I pronounce it; said Amorgen. Let this island be left to them. How far shall we go said Éber.. Past just nine waves, said Amorgen. This is the first judgement given in Ireland.

I seek the land of Ireland,

.....

*The high ship Eriu,
Eriu lofty, very green,
An incantation very cunning,
The great cunning of the wives of Bres,
Of Bres, of the wives of Buaigne,
The mighty lady Eriu,
Erimón harried her*

Amorgen calls upon power in the name of the land which they had spurned

The Sons of Mil - The price of Intent

Said Donn: I shall now, said he, put under the edge of spear and sword all that are in Ireland. And the wind rose against the ship wherein were Donn and Airech, two sons of Mil, and the ship wherein were Bres, Búas, and Buaighne; so that they were drowned at the Sandhills at Tech Duinn.

There was a contention between the sons of Míl concerning the kingship, that is, between Éber and Érimón. Amorgen was brought to them to arbitrate between them, and he said: The heritage of the chief, Donn, to the second, Érimón; and his heritage to Éber after him. But Éber would not accept that—only a division of Ireland.

In the end there were six chieftains southward and seven chieftains northward who came there; and Éber had the kingship southward and Erimón the kingship northward.

The people of the hollow hills withheld that which comes from beneath and grain wouldn't grow, nor milk flow. Ireland was as a wasteland.

Resolution was only reached when they 'made friend's with the lands God of abundance, a God who once ruled as King and whose grandsons they had overthrown. A figure, it could be said, through which 'Right Rule' is established and the land preserved against desolation.

The Sons of Mil - Summary

Take away points:

- The Sons of Mil gather a host to invade Ireland in pursuit of revenge for Ith.
- Ignored and ridiculed the spirit of sovereignty when she told them that the land would be theirs. {Eriu, Fofla, and Banba}
- When decision was made that they should leave, they went against that and again threatened total slaughter against the island's peoples.
- The battles were many and they defeated all challenges set against them.
- When conquest was completed they took outright advantage over the other peoples, sending them into the Hollow hills

Commentary:

war of vengeance

disregard for sovereignty

War of Conquest

Taking Ireland - power of words

After the war of Conquest

Section 4.

Descendent or Coloniser?

In this section we will take a moment to align the actions of the Tuatha de Danann and the Milesian's and draw some comparisons

Descendent or Coloniser?

TdD -

- Homecoming requested a share of land
- acknowledged shared language and bloodline
- tried to negotiate on more than one occasion
- exchanged sufficient technical knowledge
- they gave some space to the Fir Bolg and integrated with them.
- Pass along knowledge of living in Right balance with the land and its sovereignty

SoM -

- Gathered a war host for revenge
- Spurn and yet invoked the sovereignty of the land
- threatened total slaughter
- pursue a war of conquest
- sent the TdD into the Hollow hills
- Dispute the rule of land and demand division.
- Each focused on their own gain

Indication of what intent each tribe held in their view of Ireland.

One group saw the land as a home coming and tried and in some ways succeeded in cohabitation with the indigenous people.

The other group set out with clear intent towards harm and in seeing the bounty of Ireland decided it was right to claim it with no integration with the inhabiting peoples.

Section 5.

What does any of this mean to me?

To bring us to a close we will take a few minutes to question what relevance this information has to each of us and our path of spiritual connectivity.

What does any of this mean to me?

Is attitude important in our approach towards our tribe's dealings with other tribes?

What awareness should we carry when approaching a new land and other tribes?

What value is there in being aware of these stories and how can they shape our own spirituality?

What steps are best to consider, even when welcome or victory is assured?

What is your impact on the tribe that you connect with?

What exchange takes place in your interactions with that tribe?

Why is your intent as important as your actions