

Blog Three

Stories of Warrior Women in early Irish myth and legend – Druid Women, Morrigan Macha, An Cailleach Bhéara and Grace O’Malley



Morrigan Macha. Image: Magaret McKenna

The first evidence of human activity ever found in Ireland was at a ‘Mesolithic (middle Stone age) settlement at Mount Sandel in County Derry (in the North of Ireland) radio-carbon dated to about 7,000 BC.¹ The Irish language and a Celtic cultural tradition were prevalent in Ireland prior to the arrival of Christianity in Ireland around the fifth century AD. ‘Early Christian Irish monks recorded earlier Irish myth, legend and history as well as their own religious culture in their writings’² however it is not clear when the Celtic tradition and the Irish language first appeared in Ireland or how they developed.

¹ <http://womeninhistory.scoilnet.ie/content/main.html>

² <http://womeninhistory.scoilnet.ie/content/main.html>

The ancient Celts worshipped both male and female Gods and they regarded the essence of all life as female. The portrayal of Celtic female Gods in Irish myth and legends shows a culture where women were central to society and had positions of power.

'In early Irish mythology and legend, the feminine is quite dominant in the otherworld as well as on earth. The land of Ireland and features of its landscape such as mountains, rivers and lakes are frequently associated with female Gods and other supernatural females. Early Irish deities did not have specialised areas of influence like those of the Greeks and Romans, for instance. The same Irish female God could be a young woman or a hag, a mother or a virgin, a warrior or a seductive temptress, depending on the occasion. In mythology, it was Ériu who gave her name to Ireland but the names of her two sister goddesses Banba and Fodla were also used. Another trio of sister goddesses were all called Brigid and they were patrons of fertility, healing, smiths and poetry. They presided over a perpetual fire and the spring festival of Imbolc. Anu was an important goddess of pre-Christian Ireland and gave her name to two breast-shaped hills in Kerry called the 'Paps of Anu.' She may be identical to Dana after whom the Tuatha de Danann are called. Eamhain Macha (now called Navan Fort) near Armagh, was named for Macha who, according to legend, was forced while pregnant to race against the king's horses to save her husband from shame and dishonour. She won the race, gave birth to twins immediately and died cursing the men of Ulster to suffer the pains of childbirth at times of greatest difficulty.³

Celtic goddesses occupied strong positions often reflecting the lived reality of women in Celtic society.

Celtic women were free to bear arms (this was true in Ireland until at least the 7th century), engage in politics, and become Druids. As Moyra Caldicott aptly states in 'Women in Celtic Myth' . . . "one of the things I find so refreshing in the Celtic myths is that the women are honoured as much for their minds as for their bodies."⁴

There are many stories of warrior women in Ireland from ancient times to the mid-15th century. The women are both mythical and real and are an example of the great warrior

³ <http://womeninhistory.scoilnet.ie/content/main.html>

⁴ <https://powderroom.kinja.com/tis-the-season-to-celebrate-irish-women-warriors-and-fe-1691153534>

women from the past. Stories for these women can be found below and the women include druid women; Morrigan Macha, a supernatural, mythical figure associated with birth, death and war' An Cailleach Bhéara, a mythical, Irish, shapeshifting, female God with a range of forms and functions and Grace (Grainne) O'Malley, a pirate Queen and Female Warrior.

Druid Women

According to early Irish legends, druids were people of learning and wisdom in ancient Celtic society. The Celtic word druid means 'knowing or finding the Oak Tree'. Druids were members of the learned class among the ancient Celts. They seem to have frequented oak forests and acted in many roles including religious leaders, teachers, and judges. The earliest known records of the Druids come from the 3rd century BCE. 'Druid' is the anglicized version of a title used for some religious leaders of the pre-Christian Celts. In Old Irish, the correct term is *druí* (singular) and *druíd* (plural).⁵

In Irish Celtic mythology, a druid was also referred to as a *bandrui* in medieval Irish tales. There were also women known as a *flaith* or a prophetess. 'And of course there are the *banflaith* (sometimes *banfili*), the 'women poets', most notably Fedelm in the *Táin* (though one may argue that *flaith* and *fili* are entirely separate, it is a distinction that is often difficult to discern in the medieval texts themselves)'.⁶ The Druids were the original 'religious leaders, scientists, teachers, judges and researchers of the Celtic society. For centuries, there was a common misconception that Druids were only male. However, numerous historical records attest to the fact that there were in fact women among their ranks'.⁷ A Druid could be many different professions such as a poet, astronomer, judge, magician, medicine healer, or be proficient in law. A druid spent up to 19 years in study and they were respected members of society. They came from different areas of life such as philosophy, theology, law, the sciences, medicine and many other areas.

According to Plutarch, female Celts were nothing like Roman or Greek women. They were active in negotiating treaties and wars, and they participated in assemblies and mediated quarrels. According to the 'Pomponius Mela', virgin priestesses who could

⁵ <http://homepage.eircom.net/~archaeology/two/druids.htm>

⁶ <https://www.digitalmedievalist.com/opinionated-celtic-faqs/women-druids/>

⁷ <https://www.ancient-origins.net/history/female-druids-forgotten-priestesses-celts-005910>

predict the future lived on the island of Sena, in Brittany.⁸ In Celtic times women were equal in marriage, could be financially independent, divorce was available, women negotiated treaties and there was no distinction between male or female rulers.

A Celtic Queen in England was Boudica who led the 'last British uprising against the Romans in 60 AD. She was a priestess of Andraste, Goddess of Victory'.⁹ In Ireland Saint Brighid of Kildare or Kil-dara, Church of the Oad, was the daughter of a Druid and was said to be a druid herself before she converted to Christianity. 'She had both men and women in her religious community and she and her nuns kept a fire altar which was tended continuously until 1220 when an archbishop ordered it quenched. This fire altar mirrored the perpetual fire of the Ard-Drui (Arch-Druid) that had burned at Uisneach for centuries and thankfully the fire has been lit in modern times and is now once again tended by nuns and lay-folk.'¹⁰ Romans never took over Ireland but as Christianity took over it closed down religious orders run by women and stopped the continuation of female led communities.

A modern day interpretation of druidism sees it as 'an expression of the indigenous wisdom tradition of pagan Ireland connecting us to nature as the supreme being and to the spirit of our ancestors . . Celtic Druidism is a means of knowing yourself, understanding where you came from and realising your potential. Progressing along that path . . is to "feel and respect the inherent life-force in all things".¹¹

Morrigan Macha

The Morrigan Macha (three female beings in the one person), is a shape-shifting supernatural woman or Goddess from Celtic mythology associated with birth, death, fate and war and a legend of the great births in Ireland. The Morrigan was a member of the tribe of the Tuatha de Danann (people of the Goddess Danu) who invaded Ireland. The Morrigan was one of the main warriors and leaders of the Tuatha de Adnan army when they fought against and defeated the army of the Firbolgs 'at the First Battle of Magh Tuireadh and the Fomorians at the Second Battle of Mag Tured'¹²– all part of the various invasions of Ireland. Morrigan is a tripartite Goddess, she is three beings in one. In some

⁸ <https://www.ancient-origins.net/history/female-druids-forgotten-priestesses-celts-005910>

⁹ <http://elleneverthopman.com/female-druids/>

¹⁰ <http://elleneverthopman.com/female-druids/>

¹¹ <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/ancient-wisdom-on-the-curriculum-at-ireland-s-only-druid-school-1.1840019>

¹² <https://www.novareinna.com/guard/morrigan.html>

legends, the three beings are Morrigan, Macha or Badbh (Vulture) while another version is Morrigan, Badbh and Nemain (fury).

There are many different interpretations of who and what the Morrigan is and can be. She is a shape shifter who can appear as a young woman or an old woman or in different animal forms, she is a warrior fighter and can teach warriors the art of war. She can start battles and often appears as an old hag, crow or raven when doing so. Her screams of rage and fury can cause men to panic in battle. As the Queen of Demons, she fliers shrieking over the battlefield in the form of a raven or crow and can foretell the outcome of the battle or gloat over those who have died. Her shrieks. are said to summon the souls of the soldiers that have died on the battlefield 'to a macabre spectral' feast and when the battle is over, the warriors who have survived will leave the battlefield until dawn so that the Morrigan 'could claim the trophies of heads, euphemistically known as "the Morrigan's acorn crop.'¹³

She can be known as the Washerwoman washing bloody garments in the ford of a river, to wash away the blood of battle. Or sometimes she would the clothes of some men before battle predicting their deaths because she had chosen their clothes to wash. So she is the chooser of the slain.

She landed in the form of a raven on the body of Cuchulainn, an Irish warrior, after he died, as he had refused her favours and she vowed revenge on him. On the battlefield, she turned into an eel, wound herself around his leg and tripped him up in battle where he was killed.

Eamhain Macha (now called Navan Fort) near Armagh, was named for Macha who, according to legend, was forced while pregnant to race against the king's horses to save her husband from shame and dishonour. She won the race, gave birth to twins immediately and because of the pain she cursed men of Ulster to suffer the pains of childbirth at times of greatest difficulty. She can entice mortals to the Otherworld and to the Land of Women.

Some say The Morrigan 'presided over rivers, lakes and fresh water, in addition to being the patroness of revenge, night, magic, prophecy, priestesses and witches.'¹⁴ Objects

¹³ <https://www.novareinna.com/guard/morrigan.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.novareinna.com/guard/morrigan.html>

associated with the Morrigan are ‘bowls of brine and blood, the feather of a crow or raven, or even a piece of red cloth to symbolize the Washer at the Ford.¹⁵

An Cailleach Bhéara

An Cailleach Bhéara or Cailech Bérri is a figure that has appeared in Irish and Scottish folklore. ‘She is an extremely complex figure with a multiplicity of forms and functions and her cluster of roles includes those of a divine ancestress, an epitome of longevity in passing repeatedly through the cycle of youth and age, a sovereignty symbol, and a geotectonic role in landscape formation.’¹⁶

There are many different interpretations. As a mythical Irish Goddess from ancient times, the Cailleach Bhéara can be an ancient mid-wife like a Wandering Witch who gives birth to all things. She moves around and gives birth to the landscape, to the seas, skies, rivers and to places and people. She helps women during pregnancy, birth and motherhood, deciding only women should give birth because women guide the young people. She also looks over women and men who are infertile. She oversees the childbirth process. She inspires knowledge, courage and respect in all. She is the ‘foster mother’ to Ireland. Her festival name is Imbolc which relates to lactation of sheep and relates motherhood to animal world.

As a woman symbolising sovereignty the Cailleach Bhéara chooses or affirms the man who will be the next king and she marries this man. She becomes Queen however she remains the true power. She choose the King as guardian of the land.

She is a shape-shifter and can change from a young woman to an old woman and back and is associated with birth, death, fertility and sexuality. As a sovereignty goddess of the land, she is a strong and powerful woman who affirms who the next ruler is. She has control over her own sexuality and fertility. Whenever she feels like taking a mate, she goes out looking to find a man and if she decides to marry him he becomes King and she has a succession of Kings as mates. When the Cailleach Bhéara chooses a man to marry, he will become King and the inauguration of the King is known as the wedding of the King. The woman is the Queen however it is the Queen who rules . The King marries the

¹⁵ <https://www.novareinna.com/guard/morrigan.html>

¹⁶ *Images of Ageing in the early. Irish poem Caillech Berri* by Katja Ritari

Cailleach Bhéara or the 'land'. The woman can become sovereignty and also symbolises sovereignty.

A variation on the name of the Cailleach Bhéara appears in an old Irish poem Caillech Bérri, also known as 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', which was written in Old Irish possibly around 900. The narrator of the poem is anonymous and claims to be the old woman of Beare, a large peninsula of black earth, forests and mountains by the Atlantic ocean in West Cork in Ireland, lamenting her lost youth and the pains of old age.¹⁷ In the poem the woman refers to herself by saying 'Is mé Caillech Bérre Buí' or I am the Caillech Bérri (or Old Woman of Beare) of Buí'. Buí is the name of Dursey island located right at the end of Beara peninsula.¹⁸

Granuaile or Grace (Gráinne) O'Malley

Gráinne Ní Máiile or Grace O'Malley was a powerful Irish women born in the West of Ireland in 1530 at a time when Henry VIII was reigning in England. She was also known as Gráinne Mhaol. She was Queen of Umail in County Mayo, and chief of the Ó Máille clan. Gráinne's father, Owenn Dubhdara Uí Máille, was the O'Malley of Umhall Uachtarach. Her mother was Margaret Ní Maille. While the Norman invasion of Ireland had happened around the 12th century, outside of the capital city of Dublin and part of the province of Ulster in Northern Ireland, large parts of Ireland were still part of 'Gaelic Ireland' and not yet fully a part of English rule under what was known as the plantations. The King of England Henry VIII claimed to be King of England and Lord of Ireland however it was not until the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) that serious inroads began in relation to the plantation and full take-over of Ireland.

The O'Malleys were part of the Irish aristocracy who remained independent. According to Theresa D. Murry in History Ireland, with regard to the ruling Irish families 'a system of client ship existed; weaker families aligned themselves to powerful ones, and bonds were cemented by means of tribute, military aid, marriage and fosterage. The Uí Máilles were clients of MacWilliam Iachtarach, or the Mayo Bourkes, and in turn had clients of their own . . . The O'Malleys, and their neighbours in Iar Chonnacht, the O'Flahertys, were unusual among Gaelic families in that they earned their living from both land and

¹⁷ Images of Ageing in the Early Irish Poem Caillech Bérri by Katja Ritari

¹⁸ Images of Ageing in the Early Irish Poem Caillech Bérri by Katja Ritari

sea. Dubhdara Uí Máille traded raw materials in exchange for luxury goods, ferried Scottish mercenaries, fished, plundered, engaged in opportunistic piracy, and levied a toll on all shipping in Uí Máille waters. They existed as an independent clan, paying and receiving tribute'.¹⁹ The O'Malley shipping and trading business was considered very successful and there was a strong piracy element to it.

According to legend, Gráinne's father would not allow her on board the ships when she was young 'lest her long hair get caught in the rigging. Gráinne, seeking a solution, promptly chopped her hair off, and began to tag along. Gráinne proved to be so adept on the high seas, that she rose amongst the ranks on Owen's ships, becoming his second in command.²⁰

As the daughter of an Irish chieftain, is believed that Gráinne was well-educated and in 1546 she married Dónal an Chogaidh, who was the Tánaiste (heir to the Chief) of the O Flaherty title. Gráinne had three children, two sons and a daughter. The marriage was a strong 'political' match and 'owing to Dónal-an-Chogaidh's ineptness, Gráinne assumed the mantle of chieftainship of the O'Flahertys'. Soon after Gráinne's husband was killed in a feud and it was up to Gráinne to enact revenge.

'She is said to have led . . . a raid on the disputed Cock's Castle in Lough Corrib, which, owing to her courage, was henceforth known as Hen's Castle. Under Gaelic law, Gráinne was unable to inherit O'Flaherty land, so she returned to Umhall and settled on Clare Island. This is often portrayed as her being forced out, despite her leadership abilities, owing to misogynistic laws. But under the same laws a woman was entitled to complete control of her own property . . . Gráinne now began in earnest, with three galleys and a number of smaller boats, to earn her 'maintenance by land and sea'²¹.

Gráinne was very successful as a business woman and as a pirate, building her fleet up to at least twenty boats. She is credited with piracy attacks from 'Donegal to Waterford'. She was a formidable woman and according to one story is said to have kidnapped and demanded a ransom for the son of the Earl of Howth after he refused her hospitality.

¹⁹ Gráinne Mhaol, pirate queen of Connacht: behind the legend, Teresa D. Murry, History Ireland, Early Modern History (1500-1700, Features, Issue 2, March, April 2005, Volume 13

²⁰ Gráinne Mhaol, pirate queen of Connacht: behind the legend, Teresa D. Murry, History Ireland, Early Modern History (1500-1700, Features, Issue 2, March, April 2005, Volume 13

²¹ Gráinne Mhaol, pirate queen of Connacht: behind the legend, Teresa D. Murry, History Ireland, Early Modern History (1500-1700, Features, Issue 2, March, April 2005, Volume 13

The ransom demand which was met was ‘the promise of the setting of an extra place at each meal at Howth Castle’.

Gráinne then married Risdeárd an Iarainn Bourke in 1567 and moved to Rockfleet tower-house, Carraigahowley, Clew Bay. Legend suggests that ‘after the year, (and the birth of another son called Tibbot-na-Long) Gráinne and her followers camped out in the castle, and Gráinne unceremoniously ended her marriage by shouting out the window: Richard Burke, I dismiss you’²². There is speculation over whether the marriage ended or not and Gráinne continued to live at Rockfleet House and to attend public functions with her husband until his death in 1583 of natural causes.

In addition to building her business, her wealth and her piracy trade, Gráinne, now a wealthy woman, was faced with the growing threat of English rule. When a representative of the English crown Sir Henry Sidney attempted to claim taxes he summoned the Irish lords to a meeting where he met ‘a most feminine sea captain called Granny Imallye who offered her services onto me’. Although he didn’t avail of her ‘three galleys and two hundred fighting men’, he did sail with her to inspect the seaward defences of Galway, a service for which she successfully billed him. Sidney noted her show of strength and concluded that ‘This was a notorious woman in all the coasts of Ireland’.²³ Shortly after Gráinne was arrested for plundering and spent time in prison including Dublin Castle. She was released in 1579.

As part of the continued occupation one of Gráinne’s sons was killed and Gráinne became an active rebel against Sir Richard Bingham the appointed provincial president of Connacht. She increased her activities rebelling against crown forces and went into a short period of exile in Ulster as a result. Later one of Gráinne’s other sons Tibbot-na-Long rose up in rebellion against Bingham. Bingham retaliated by having Gráinne’s land at Carraigahowley ransacked and her property seized as well as her shipping fleet impounded. Gráinne’s son had no choice but to submitted.

Gráinne, having lost everything, appealed directly to Elizabeth. Her initial petition, dated 1593, pleads age and poverty, and pledges ‘to evade with sword and fire all your highness enemyes’. She requested ‘some reasonable maintenance’ and the return of seized property in exchange for total allegiance.

²² *Tis the Season to celebrate Irish Women Warriors and Feminists*, Amanda of Happiness

²³ Gráinne Mhaol, pirate queen of Connacht: behind the legend, Teresa D. Murry, History Ireland, Early Modern History (1500-1700, Features, Issue 2, March, April 2005, Volume 13

While the petition was en route to London, the earl of Tyrone was secretly acting to begin a rebellion against the Crown. Tibbot-na-Long was implicated, imprisoned and charged with treason.²⁴

Gráinne met with Elizabeth I, the Queen of England, and succeeded in having her son, Tibbot-na-Long released and any charges against her dismissed. Gráinne was granted permission to return to sea however Bingham continued to pursue her and Gráinne once again appealed to Queen Elizabeth. Gráinne's claims were investigated and 'Bingham, fearing new charges which had been laid against him, fled to England and was imprisoned'.²⁵ For her audience with Queen Elizabeth they both spoke in Latin as Gráinne had no English and Elizabeth no Irish. Gráinne also refused to kneel to the Queen. Gráinne set about building up her wealth again and with two of her sons, she reached an accommodation with the English crown to support them in return for financial compensation. Gráinne Ní Máille is believed to have died in 1603. Throughout her life, she was a powerful, independent woman who stood up for her rights and proved she was able to defend herself and her family.

Legacy of Powerful Women today

As part of its European-wide work, Smashing Times have implemented two European wide projects raising awareness of the stories of women in Ireland and Europe today. The first project is called **Women War and Peace** and raises awareness of women's stories in Europe from WWII. The second project is called **Women in an Equal Europe** and raises awareness of women's stories in Europe today. Both projects were supported by **Europe for Citizens** and the **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Reconciliation Fund**.

Women's Stories of WWII

Women, War and Peace used the creative processes of theatre and film to explore the role of women in Europe from WWII and the power of the EU in promoting peace and gender equality today. The project resulted in the creation of an original theatre performance ***The Woman is Present: Women's Stories of WWII*** by Deirdre Kinahan,

²⁴ Gráinne Mhaol, pirate queen of Connacht: behind the legend, Teresa D. Murry, History Ireland, Early Modern History (1500-1700, Features, Issue 2, March, April 2005, Volume 13

Mary Moynihan, Fiona Bawn Thompson and Paul Kennedy; a short film ***Tell Them Our Names*** distributed internationally and screened at the Kerry Film Festival and London Eye International Film Festival; and the creation of a **Women War and Peace book** with a foreword by Marian Harkin, MEP. The book contains 23 women's stories highlighting women's experiences during WWII and ways to promote human rights, gender equality and peace and can be accessed here:
<http://www.epageflip.net/i/748584-women-war-and-peace>

The performance and film created as part of the Women War and Peace project are both based on a creative re-imagining of moments from the lives of women during WWII recalling stories of bravery, sacrifice and love amidst the horror of war, as women stood up against Fascism and totalitarianism and refused to accept oppression. Women's stories that have inspired the performance and film include **Mary Elmes** (1908-2002), a Cork woman who was the first Irish person honoured as 'Righteous Among Nations' for her work saving Jewish children from the Nazi gas chambers during World War II; **Ettie Steinberg** (1914-1942), the only female Jewish Irish citizen known to have been murdered in Auschwitz; **Martha Hillers** (1911- 2001) from Germany who wrote her autobiography *Eine Frau in Berlin (A Woman in Berlin)* under the name 'Anonyma' (Anonymous) detailing her experiences of the last days of WWII as she and over one million other women were raped and abused by Allied soldiers of the Red Army; **Neus Catala Palleja** (1915-20019) from Spain, a member of the United Socialist party of Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War, an active collaborator with the French Resistance during WWII and a survivor of Ravensbruck concentration camp for women; **Maria Eugenia Jasinska** (1906-1943) from Lódz in Poland who worked for the Resistance and gave up her own life rather than 'name names'; and **Dolores Ibárruri** or La Passionaria (1895-1989) from Spain, a revolutionary leader, political activist, communist and crusader against Fascism during the Spanish Civil War who created the famous cry 'They Shall Not Pass'.

Women's Stories Today

Women in an Equal Europe is a European art-based project using creative processes of theatre and film, a feminist framework and online digital resources to promote a greater understanding of women's rights and the positive changes that have come about in relation to gender equality as a result of belonging to the EU today. Twenty-one women were interviewed – six from Ireland, five from Spain, five from Croatia and five from

Serbia. The interviews are contained in the ***Women in an Equal Europe Book***, which can be read by everybody, to promote a remembrance of women's equality and experiences of life in Europe, ensuring women's voices and stories are equally heard and acknowledged.

Women interviewed from Ireland include **Olwen Fouéré**, Actor, Director and Creative Artist; **Senator Ivana Bacik**, Barrister and Reid Professor of Criminal Law at Trinity College Dublin and Labour Party Senator; and **Mary Lawlor**, Human Rights Activist, Founder and current board member of Front Line Defenders and Adjunct Professor, School of Business, Trinity College Dublin.

The women interviewed from Spain include Pilar Mena, a specialist in Labour Relations, a Teacher and Human Resources Consultant, at the European University of Valencia; Catalina Valencia, Coordinator, Start-Up Europe Awards Initiative and Communications Officer, Finnova Foundation; and Lourdes Miron, Social Educator, Journalism student, President and General Director, Jovesolides.

The women interviewed from Croatia include Milena Babic, Civil Society Development Practitioner; Senka Nedeljkovic, journalist; and Biljana Gaća, a City Councillor from Vukovar, Croatia . The women interviewed from Serbia include Ivana Novakovic, Professor of Human Genetics, Faculty of Medicine, University of Belgrade, Serbia; Marina Illić, Logistics and Fundraising Manager, Social Margins Centre, and Global Human Rights Forum; and Manja Marinkovic, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Social Margin Centre, Belgrade, Serbia.

The Women in an Equal Europe Book can be accessed [here](#).

Many women and men are working together today in Europe to create equality for all and many groups are still fighting for equal rights. A key part of fighting for equality for men, women and trans people is to acknowledge and accept differences while also recognising what we have in common. All the countries in Europe share common myths and legends as well as their own unique ones and also share stories of powerful men and women in history and today who are campaigning for equality for all. Remembering our myths and legends and the stories of great men and women in history is a key part of exploring our differences and commonalities and promoting an equal Europe for all.

Sources

Discovering Women in Irish History, Department of Education and Science, An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1

Images of Ageing in the early. Irish poem Caillech Berri by Katja Ritari

For further reading on Gráinne Mhaol see the article Gráinne Mhaol, pirate queen of Connacht: behind the legend, by Teresa D. Murry, published in History Ireland, Early Modern History (1500-1700), Features, Issue 2, March, April 2005, Volume 13.

<https://www.historyireland.com/early-modern-history-1500-1700/grainne-mhaol-pirate-queen-of-connacht-behind-the-legend/>

The Morrigan, Celtic Raven Goddess

<https://www.novareinna.com/guard/morrigan.html>

'Tis the Season to celebrate Irish Women Warriors and Feminists

<https://powderroom.kinja.com/tis-the-season-to-celebrate-irish-women-warriors-and-fe-1691153534>

About the author: Mary Moynihan is a Writer, Theatre and Film-Maker and Artistic Director of the Smashing Times international Centre for the Arts and Equality and a Theatre Lecturer for TU Dublin Conservatoire of Music and Drama.

Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality

www.smashingtimes.ie

Mary Moynihan Twitter: @Mary_Moynihan

This blog is created for Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality as part of **Legend of the Great Birth**, a European cooperation project funded by Creative Europe and implemented in the framework of the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#). Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this article. All information was believed to be correct as of March 2020. Nevertheless, the author or Smashing Times cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of its use for other purposes or in other contexts. Smashing Times and the partner organisations and all referenced authors cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein and to the fullest extent permitted by law accept no liability arising from the use of these materials or any such third party materials and are not responsible for the content of external internet sites or other material listed in this document.

