

# AVIAN ILLUMINATIONS

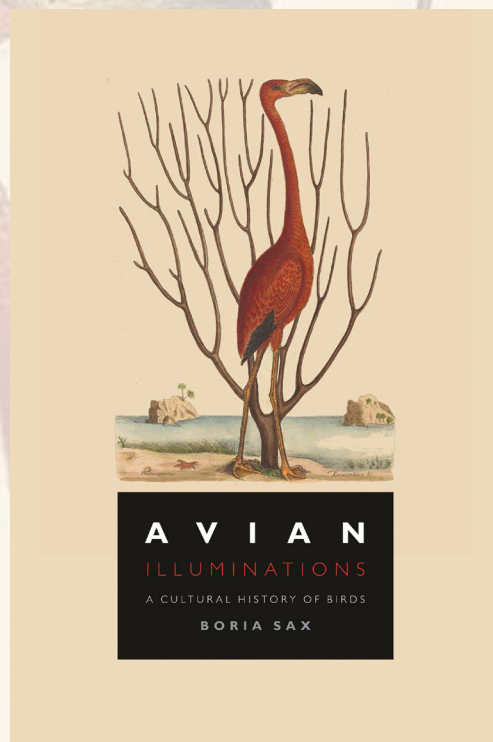
## *A Cultural History of Birds*

BORIA SAX

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New book coming Spring 2026!



'The wonderful *Avian Illuminations* traces in rich and fascinating detail the cultural relationships between humans and birds through history, philosophy, religion and art. This is a book for difficult times – it entertains, educates, elucidates and, in its assessment of what might be necessary to repair a damaged world, gives us hope.' — Esther Woolfson, author of *Corvus: A Life with Birds* (2009) and *Between Light and Storm: How We Live with Other Species* (2020)

'Boria Sax has long been my most trusted guide to understanding the complex relationships between humans and animals. In *Avian Illuminations*, I feel very fortunate to follow his wonderful mind once again as he weaves a complex portrait of the symbolic richness of our portrayals of birds throughout history and myth.' — Ceridwen Dovey, author of *Blood Kin* (2007) and *Only the Animals* (2014)

*Avian Illuminations* examines the many roles birds have played in human society, from food, messengers, deities and pets, to omens, muses, timekeepers, custodians, hunting companions, decorative motifs and, most importantly, embodiments of our aspirations. It narrates the history of our relationships with a host of birds including crows, owls, parrots, falcons, eagles, nightingales, hummingbirds, and many more. Along the way the book describes how birds' nesting has symbolised human romance, how their flight has inspired inventors throughout history, and concludes by showing that the interconnections between birds and humans are so manifold that a world without birds would effectively mean an end to human culture itself. Beautifully illustrated, this is a superb overview of our long and rich association with our feathered friends.

Boria Sax teaches at Sing Sing prison and online in the graduate literature program at Mercy College. He has published many books including *City of Ravens* (2012), *Imaginary Animals* (Reaktion, 2013) and *Dinomania* (Reaktion, 2019).



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