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THE 'MAST' OF MACHA

THE CELTIC IRISH AND THE WAR GODDESS OF IRELAND

"There are rough places yonder
Where men cut off the mast of Macha;
Where they drive young calves into the fold;
Where the raven-women instigate battle"₁

"A hundred generous kings died there,
- harsh, heaped provisions -
with nine ungentle madmen,
with nine thousand men-at-arms"₂

Celtic mythology is a brilliant shouting turmoil of stories, and within it is found a singularly poignant myth, 'Macha's Curse'. Macha is one of the powerful Morrigna - the bloody Goddesses of War for the pagan Irish - but the story of her loss in Macha's Curse seems symbolic of betrayal on two scales. It speaks of betrayal on a human scale. It also speaks of betrayal on a mythological one: of ancient beliefs not represented. These 'losses' connect with a proposal made by Anne Baring and Jules Cashford, in The Myth of The Goddess: Evolution of an Image, that any Goddess's inherent nature as a War Goddess reflects the loss of a larger, more powerful, image of a Mother Goddess, and another culture.³ This essay attempts to describe Macha and assess the applicability of Baring and Cashford's argument in this particular case.

Several problems have arisen in exploring this topic. First, there is less material about Macha than other Irish Goddesses. Second, the fertile and unique synergy of cultural beliefs created by the Celts⁴ cannot be dismissed and, in a short paper, a problem exists in balancing what Macha meant to her people with the broader implications of the proposal made by Baring and Cashford. Lastly, it is not clear how to discuss Macha without discussing the Celtic heritage and practice of war: the pagan Celts had a paradigm of 'Heroic Beliefs' that included women who initiated and

participated in war and this would have implications for understanding Macha. This essay will develop an image of Macha through a discussion of the individual nature of Celtic martial heritage and Irish Goddess beliefs, before considering the broader questions about Baring and Cashford's argument, how it relates to Macha, and the story of Macha's Curse.

Macha cannot be assessed, at all, in isolation from the very nature of the culture brought to Ireland by the Celtic people, or the presence and nature of war in that culture. Celtic culture descended from Bronze Age cultures in non-Mediterranean Europe that have been traced to the Neolithic period.⁵ A "proto-Celtic" people emerged gradually.⁶ By 700 B.C., "new elements [had appeared],...the horse [had been] adopted on a large scale,...new metal types [and uses indicated] the existence of equestrian warriors,...long swords were used [and] ironworking was widespread".⁷ These people were called the first 'Celts'.⁸ At the peak of Celtic culture, Celtic civilization stretched from Ireland in the far northwest to Spain in the southwest and swept across Europe in a broad arc to Turkey and Asia Minor.⁹ The Celts were, by then, "accounted one of the four peripheral nations" by Rome and Greece.¹⁰ The Celts sacked Rome in 390-387 B.C. and Delphi in 279 B.C. By 225 B.C., the Romans had moved militarily and defeated the Celts in Italy. By 84 B.C., Rome controlled Gaul and Celtic Britain had fallen.¹¹ Only Ireland was untouched by Rome¹² and it remained undisturbed by major intrusion until fourth century A.D.¹³ Throughout this pagan period the Celts had an oral culture.¹⁴ It is, as a result, only from the records of other, and later, cultures that a picture emerges of the pagan people who created Macha - and for whom Macha provided.

Roman and Greek observers described Celts as proud, frank, insolent, boastful;¹⁵ and noted their lyric genius, prodigality, and reckless bravery.¹⁶ One modern source describes Celts as "powerful, warlike and elitist people" with a "rigid hierarchy [and] deeply stratified socio-political system".¹⁷ A second source sees them, instead, as "a varied and complex group of societies",¹⁸ and another says they were "highly skilled miners, smiths, builders, farmers, and merchants".¹⁹ A fourth source argues that while they lacked "any central organization [or] sense of cohesion" - there was still organization in learned classes.²⁰ And, while one source says Greeks were "appalled by the warring nature of the Celts"²¹, another says the Celts left

exquisite art of their own creation.²² The Celts were "notoriously rich in paradox"²³, and this paradoxical hybrid culture was brought to, and bred in, Ireland by the pagan Celtic people.

Pagan Celtic culture in Ireland was, in many ways, a 'Heroic' society.²⁴ Their myths are full of invasions and victorious conflict.²⁵ There is a sense of individuals - men, kings, heroes, and gods in their myths. They are part of the Indo-European linguistic group, connecting to the aggressive Indo-European influx into Europe in earlier times.²⁶ Moreover, although classical observers saw Celtic bravery as bordering on recklessness,²⁷ the Celts did not view their actions the same way. When Alexander the Great asked Adriatic Celts what they feared, they replied in "disarming candor [that] they were afraid of nothing except that the sky might fall on them".²⁸ In Ireland, a millennium later, taunted, mythic Irish Conchobhar made the same reply: "unless the sky [falls upon] the surface of the earth...I shall bring back every cow to its byre...every woman to her own abode...after victory in battle and combat and contest".²⁹ Without glorifying the nature of war, the Celts were not a timid or restrained people. Macha, as will be seen, does not deal in small measures as a War Goddess.

Celtic women were also rulers, fighting warriors and war leaders. Celtic women "could and did rule in their own right".³⁰ Evidence of continental Celtic women rulers dates back to 500 B.C.; women buried with torcs (elite status), chariots and iron weapons.³¹ In 377 B.C., a woman named 'Macha of the Red Hair' was called Queen of all Ireland.³² Records indicate there were Celtic women leaders in the later Roman period including: Boudicca, Cartimandua, Onomaris, Chiomara, and Teuta.³³ Celtic women of this period also held public office³⁴ and acted as ambassadors.³⁵ Pagan Irish Celtic women had substantive property and marriage rights;³⁶ became druids (highly placed, teachers, law arbiters, religious leaders);³⁷ had councils of their own and sat with men in the larger councils of the clan.³⁸ Christianity was still tithing independent Irish queens in seventh century A.D.³⁹

The Romans found Celtic women war leaders disturbing.⁴⁰ One classical author observed "The women of the Celts are nearly as tall as their men and they rival them in courage".⁴¹ Another wrote:

"A whole troop of foreigners would not [withstand] a single Celt if he called his wife to his assistance. The wife is even more formidable. She is usually very strong...She begins to strike blows mingled with kicks as if they were [missiles from] a catapult... The voices of these women are formidable and threatening, even when [they are] being friendly".⁴²

Celtic women followed their husbands into battle.⁴³ Chiomara, a Celtic queen, was reported to have been captured by Romans and raped, exchanged for ransom, and at the exchange to have decapitated her rapist and taken the head home to her husband.⁴⁴ Celtic women and men, both, took up arms with queens like: Boudicca of the Iconi and Grainne Ni Maille of Connaught in Ireland.⁴⁵ There were titles for female warriors in Ireland.⁴⁶ Irish Celts, including women, "shouted boasting taunts, sang battle songs and made ritual displays of aggression in a frenzy before battle"⁴⁷ to terrify the enemy.⁴⁸ There were professional female warriors.⁴⁹ Mythic Irish warrior-queens existed⁵⁰ and mythic Irish heroes were taught their skills of battle by women like Scathach.⁵¹ Women fighting in war was reality for Celtic women and their men. There does not seem to have been any inherent discrepancy between 'the feminine' and 'power and war' for the pagan Irish Celts. The Irish Celts would have recognized 'Macha' in their women.

In Irish mythology, *Macha* is one of *The Morrigan* - what one source calls a "Goddess of war, death and slaughter [without] a trace of human charity".⁵² The Morrigan is thought to be a collective entity made up of the Goddesses *Morrigan*, *Nemain*, *Macha*, and *Badb*.⁵³ 'She' is considered to be a 'triad' of Goddesses whose names are used *interchangeably*, singly or together.⁵⁴ Macha is partly a collective entity or class (the *Morrigna*)⁵⁵ and partly an individual goddess.

In describing the Morrigna (i.e. Macha) one source noted that names "tend to preserve the earliest nature of a diety",⁵⁶ and the names of the Morrigna are symbols that would have literally cried meaning in the oral Irish Celtic tradition:

"Macha, a royston crow; Nemain, the Badb of battle, a hooded crow; Badb, rough raven, clawed vulture; lying wolves."⁵⁷

"Nemain, panic, frenzy; Badb ("bodu"), war, battle, fight, strife; cru flechto ("badb"), blood, gore, fight, attack, assault."⁵⁸

"Morrigan (mor-rigan) Queen of Death/the Slain, The Great Queen; women from the sid; Badb, bean sidhe, a female fairy, phantom; Morrighan, the great fairy."⁵⁹

The Morrigna were, therefore, symbolized by crows, ravens, vultures, and wolves; and were not only symbolic of war, battle, fighting, strife, panic, frenzy, blood, gore, and death, but also of the sidhe, the places of the Tuatha De Danann, the "Children of the Goddess Danu".

Other references add to this image of a War Goddess. The Morrigna physically went into battle with their people, for example:

"We will go with you, said the women, that is, Badb, Macha, Morrigan."⁶⁰

"The badb and monsters...cried out so that they were heard from the cliffs and waterfalls and in the hollows of the earth... the dreadful agonizing cry..."⁶¹

"Badb, Macha, and Morrigan...fixed their pillars in the ground lest anyone should flee before the stones should flee."⁶²

and, when asked what she will do in battle, Morrigan replies:

"Not hard to say...I have stood fast; I shall pursue what was watched; I will be able to kill; I will be able to destroy those who might be subdued."⁶³

The Morrigna brought victory and other powers to war as well:

"Nemain, Danand, Badb and Macha
Morrigan who brings victory...
were the sorceresses of the Tuatha De Danann
I sing of them sternly"⁶⁴

"showers of sorcery...sustaining rain clouds of mist... a downpour of red blood...from the air upon the warriors' heads...they did not allow [the enemy] to leave for three days and nights."⁶⁵

Morrigan and Nemain saw the future, and Morrigan fired warriors to battle and announced

great victories with poetry (roscada): "to the heights of Ireland and its sid-hosts, to its chief waters and to its river mouths".⁶⁶ Macha and Badb also waited for the dead of battle:

"Mesrad Machae, the mast of Macha, the heads of men who have been slaughtered"⁶⁷

"The red Badb will be grateful to them for the battle-encounters I see."⁶⁸

What develops is an image of a powerful, dark, and because she existed, a needed 'collective entity' that prophesied, incited to battle, created terrifying noise, engaged in direct assault (physical and otherworld), proclaimed heroic victory, brought victory, and took 'something' from the dead.

Finally, in rounding out this description of Macha as a War Goddess, although Goddesses and Gods have rituals, available references either could not find, and/or did not list, cult rituals associated with the Morrigna outside of battle.⁶⁹ However, the description of the Morrigna resonates truly with what is actually known about Celtic war practices in Ireland and elsewhere:⁷⁰ the presence of women, the roscada, the aggressive noise in battle, pillars in fields, the taking of heads, and the dead left on the field of battle by some Celts so that "the soul goes up to heaven if the body is devoured on the field by the hungry vultures".⁷¹ The Morrigna are, significantly, as War Goddesses, symbolized by the crow and raven - the principle carrion birds of Ireland. The Morrigna reflect the reality and beliefs of the pagan Irish Celts in war. If this image of the collective Goddess is seen by some as 'without human charity', it is not clear that the Celts had any illusions about the 'charity' of war. Neither were the Celts above the same violence.

The discussion now turns to the proposal made by Baring and Cashford and explores whether or not Macha may be connected to something older and other than 'War'. Baring and Cashford, in their discussion of Mother Goddess beliefs in the proposed paradigm, begin by describing a 'visible constellation' of principles, symbols and figures that collectively speak, not of anomalies in 'heroic' and what are later called 'patriarchal' cultures, not of something

'outgrown' by time; but of a widespread, ancient, and alternative view of the universe.⁷² These constellations are found everywhere in what remains of the religion of the pagan Irish Celts.

The Celts considered the universe to be feminine.⁷³ Goddesses "had a complex all-pervasive influence on the religious thought of the Celtic people".⁷⁴ "The natural world was central,..everything in the natural world was "numinous",.."each rock, stream, mountain and tree [had] a spirit of its own".⁷⁵ The original Celtic creation myth is the story of the Goddess Danu.⁷⁶ Danu means 'Waters of Heaven',⁷⁷ recalling Baring and Cashford's ancient "Goddess of the Upper Waters" paradigm. Danu's children, the Tuatha De Danann, were said to 'live' under ancient mounds left in Ireland by a previous Megalithic Goddess Culture of the Neolithic Age.⁷⁸ The Irish Otherworld was called Tir na mBeo ("The Land of Women"),⁷⁹ strongly reminiscent of Baring and Cashford's "Goddess of the Lower Waters". Celtic goddesses (like Epona and others)⁸⁰ 'connected' the souls of the dead to the afterlife, reminiscent of the Mother Goddess paradigm for returning life to the dark aspect of creation. Boundaries of the Otherworld were mutable - not permanent.⁸¹ "Death [was] not the end of everything: transmigration of souls and rebirth are constant themes of this mythology,..expressed by shape-shifting and magic".⁸² The sacred tree, the divine bull and otherworld birds "are familiar features of insular Celtic tradition".⁸³ Sacred sites (hills) were/are named after goddesses, e.g. 'Paps of Anu'. Triples, spirals, labyrinth-like knot designs, and sacred snakes are found throughout Celtic artistic expression.⁸⁴ The site of Tara, in Ireland, is the site of an ancient ritual joining of the Goddess and a king: there was a tradition of a sacred relationship between the king and the land.⁸⁵ And, in spite of the presence of other symbols associated with heroic culture imagery, the belief system of the Celts is "not considered" a heroic (solar) belief system.⁸⁶

Goddesses had not only an all-pervasive but also a central role in Irish beliefs. One source refers to Goddesses in Ireland as "avatars of the land in all its aspects: its fertility, its sovereignty, its embodiment of the powers of death as well as life".⁸⁷ In the mythology, Irish goddesses include:⁸⁸ Danu, who falls from heaven, nurtures a sacred oak, and with it

births Dagda the 'father of the gods'; Anu, a goddess of plenty, and sometimes identified with The Morrigan; Tea, Tailten, Carmain, Macha, Culi, and Teite who 'name' the most important ancient festival sites and markets; Eriu, Fotla, Banba who are the sovereign goddesses of Ireland; Life, Sinnann, Brigit, and Boand who gave their names to Irish rivers (water is sacred); and Medb Lethderg, Macha, Cailleach Beara who also represent sovereignty sometimes. Significantly, birds and animals are connected to many mythic Irish Goddesses,⁸⁹ and birds and animals are part of Baring and Cashford's constellation of Mother Goddess symbols.

There are, in addition, very specific connections between Macha and the other Morrigna to these Mother Goddess symbols. Macha is associated with birds symbolically (crows). Morrigan appears in the form of a 'bird' perched on the pillar stone⁹⁰ and changes into a cow⁹¹ (an image used elsewhere to symbolize a Mother Goddess). Macha is Tuatha De Danann, a 'child of Danu' who is called "Mother of the Gods", and Macha is connected to a pivotal triad of Irish Goddesses (Eriu, Fotla, and Banba) who represent the land itself.⁹² Macha is fertile and gives birth. The root of Macha's name is also 'field, plain, an enclosure for milking cows, pasturage for beasts, closed field, or milking yard'⁹³ (yet another Mother Goddess image). Two notable sites (one a city and two hills) are named after Macha: Armagh (Ard Macha, Macha's Heights) and Emhain Macha.⁹⁴ Finally, two particular references to Macha have a direct connection to the story of Macha's Curse:

"she who owned the Liath Macha, the Grey of Macha"⁹⁵
(Liath Macha is a horse, a symbol of fertility)

"Macha, greatness of wealth"⁹⁶

What is interesting here, is that a different aspect of Macha appears - one of fertility and life, connection to animals, nourishment, a Mother Goddess (Danu), wealth or prosperity, and an entire group of symbols with broader meanings. The broader Goddess connection suggests that the creation of Macha, as a War Goddess, as she is, may have roots not only in the physical culture of war, but also in an older 'Mother Goddess' culture.

At this point, having described Macha and the Goddess beliefs around her, the remainder of this paper will focus on the story of 'Macha's Curse' or 'The Debility of the Ulstermen'.⁹⁷ This is a highly abridged version:

A man's wife died and a stately woman appeared at his fort and took on the role of his wife. In everything she did, when she turned, she turned to the right. She called herself Macha. They became wealthy and prosperous in all things. She became pregnant.

One day, at a royal gathering, with the King's horses winning all the races, her husband, in a vain and boastful mood, claimed that his wife, pregnant as she was, could run faster than the King's horses. The pregnant Macha was summoned by the furious King and told that she must race against the King's best team of horses. Her husband would die if she refused. In answer to the King's demand, Macha revealed her name, saying "that her name would stay with this place forever". She pleaded with the King to allow her to bear her children before she was forced to race. To the assembly she cried "Help me! For a mother bore each one of you". The King and the people were oblivious to her plight.

The race began. She won. As she reached the winning post, she gave birth to twins, in the dust, in public, and pronounced her curse: "From this hour, the ignominy that you have inflicted upon me will redound to the shame of each of you. When a time of oppression falls upon you, each one of you will be overcome with weakness, as the weakness of a woman in child-birth, and this will remain upon you for five days and four nights to the ninth generation."

The story can be looked at in two contexts. First, without reference to Baring and Cashford's paradigm, the story is curious in that while it is a story of the 'dismissal of a figure by greater powers', there is an element of 'shame' inherent to the narrative. There is no 'trust' in the man Macha 'husbands' and the story is written to make this clear. Neither is there mercy or understanding around her. Forcing a pregnant woman to race for her husband's life was, likely, unacceptable. The King and husband are revealed as cruel and vain. The men are cursed for their indifference to compassion and the implication is that the Curse is just. More important, the men have no victory. No great principle is successfully established. No nation saved. The King 'wins' but his kingdom is cursed into vulnerability. Macha, on the other hand, brings nothing but wealth and prosperity to her 'husband' and she saves his life. She also has the last word. It seems

difficult to imagine people listening, husbands beside pregnant wives, universally rejoicing in the king and men of this story. There does not seem to be any 'heroic honor won' in this story, except by Macha.

Celtic 'kingship' is also failed in Macha's story - especially given the sacred connection between a king and the land (and its people) in Irish Celtic belief. Another myth in which a Macha is named, one in which the figure wrestles power from two kings through war and subterfuge,⁹⁸ sets rules for 'mythic kingship': one of which is the well-being of pregnant women. Problematically, the applicability of the story to the Goddess Macha is questioned.⁹⁹ However, it is interesting that the story is consistent with the image of Macha connected both to war and to sovereignty, as discussed earlier.

The story raises questions about 'who' wrote the story for 'what' purposes. If it was written about Ulstermen by others, it is not complementary. If it was written by Ulstermen about themselves: why? The defeat of Macha is not 'glorious'. The story seems to say 'something here is wrong'. Perhaps it is a 'warning' or 'protest' saying look what happens when men forget their Goddess, Macha: they are cursed, she prevails and gives life. Or, as if, without having 'deliberately killed' their own Goddess, the people were describing that they sensed something had passed - saying 'these men (we) are diminished and look at how it happened'. As someone unknown said sometime "that which cannot be explained still must be expressed". It is impossible to know how the story began, but it is interesting that the pagan Irish Celts did not have a purely heroic belief system, and that something in pagan Irish society respected women and honored Goddesses. Without any reference to Baring and Cashford's proposal, the story of Macha's Curse seems to violate that heritage as well.

The second context for discussion of the story is Baring and Cashford's paradigm that the inherent nature of a War Goddess reflects the loss of a larger Mother Goddess. One facet of this paradigm is that this loss inherently takes place in heroic/martial cultures.¹⁰⁰ The pagan Irish Celts had, as outlined, a long history of war, heroic beliefs, and related 'solar' belief elements in their culture. And, although previous discussion of their beliefs dealt with symbols

found in the Mother Goddess paradigm, there is a conflicting element in pagan Irish Celtic mythology. This conflicting element, with the story of Macha's Curse, supports the possibility that Baring and Cashford's assessment of War Goddesses may be valid. One reference stated that "it was hard to reconcile [a defeated, pregnant, powerless] Macha with the image of Macha as a War Goddess."¹⁰¹ It is less difficult, however, if there is a connection to a larger lost Mother Goddess figure.

Irish mythology has a number of elements that Baring and Cashford identify as symptomatic of the transitional loss of the Mother Goddess figure. For example, nearly every great Irish site is now associated through a mythic story with the rape (or downfall) of a goddess.¹⁰² A hero, at one point, tells Morrigan (the collective War Goddess entity) that he 'doesn't have time' for her offer of herself. (The union of the Mother Goddess with men and gods is, in the Mother Goddess paradigm, sacred.) Role reversals are present, for example, in one story a god embraces a dying goddess (hag) and restores her to life.¹⁰³ (The god is the source of life rather than the goddess.) In this context, Macha's Curse can take on a new meaning. Macha's Curse may be a story of the betrayal of not just Macha - but of the betrayal of a larger Mother Goddess that Macha was still connected to and represented. The elements of the story remain intact, but the story becomes the dismissal of a belief system and the connections in it between the Goddess, sovereignty, well-being, and the kings who 'represent' the land.

If Baring and Cashford are correct, Macha's Curse fits into a kind of 'goddess defeat story' found in other cultures where ancient goddesses disappeared - myths like the story of Tiamat. Tiamat is riven, buried and pierced to create 'all things' rather than life coming from her.¹⁰⁴ It is part of a pattern, explored by Baring and Cashford, in which a single Mother Goddess is followed by many goddesses and gods, heroic values and war appear, societies are defeated, new dominating Gods appear (sometimes from the outside) and as power shifts, the goddesses and women are disempowered, loose domain, and Goddesses are defeated, confined, reduced or disappear.¹⁰⁵ War Goddesses in this paradigm are part of the heroic or martial stage; less than the previous whole of creation, i.e. less than sum of both the light and the complementary dark (which made up the whole cycle of life in the Mother Goddess)

and now only a destructive part of it. If Baring and Cashford are correct, all the stages of the Mother Goddess are present in pagan Irish Celtic culture at the same time: Danu, 'The Mother of all Gods'; the Morrigna, powerful War Goddesses; and Macha, the dual Life Giver/War Goddess, who is defeated. Condren sees the story of Macha's Curse as "the foundation myth of Irish patriarchal culture."¹⁰⁶

Yet, in closing, it has to be said that the Irish pagan Celts had a unique culture - unique to the point that women initiated and fought war, and had rights that far exceeded those of women in other 'heroic' and patriarchal cultures such as Rome and Greece. The pagan Celtic belief system is not considered 'Heroic' (solar or patriarchal) even though the Celts were an Iron Age people. Their belief system was full of what Baring and Cashford have defined as Mother Goddess symbols. The Celts were also connected directly to the descendants of Mother Goddess cultures throughout their continental spread and again in the remnant Megalithic cultures of Ireland. It raises the possibility that they had a society in which the 'heroic' was not tightly connected to, and did not need, the defeat of women and Goddesses. Equally, we also know that the stories that come to us, much later, have been filtered and changed by intervening beliefs, some hostile to the pagan world.¹⁰⁷ And, it raises a second possibility that Macha's Curse is one such late-coming and modified story, distant from the birth of the powerful and bloody Morrigna.

Macha held something the Irish Celts needed 'held'. Where does the 'heroic mind' that believes absolutely in Goddesses find a secure place to express something as huge as 'War'? And, in a 'numinous' world where every living thing is Divine, what does the 'heroic mind' think when ravens come to the dead on the field of battle? Goddesses still held both life and death for these Celts. It is not clear, therefore, that to the pagan Irish Celts, choosing to place War with the Morrigan was a choice of 'contempt' either for women or for Goddesses.

It may be that Baring and Cashford are correct - their proposal deals with changes through cultures over a long period of time. The pagan Irish Celts may have been in one of the 'subtractive' transitional changes described by Baring and Cashford. Or, perhaps, a unique

'heroic' paradigm existed in these Celts and in Macha, and letting Macha and the other Morrigna (Goddesses) 'hold War' was not only a powerful but also an 'additive' choice to them. Possibly both of these two paradigms are true for different periods of Irish Celtic history - or maybe neither are - but there is something notable, nevertheless, in the questions that are left by the picture of Macha as a War Goddess and the story of Macha's Curse.

Endnotes

¹ Angelique Gulermovich Epstein, “War Goddess: The Morrigan and her Germano-Celtic Counterparts,” Electronic version #148; September 1998, diss., University of California, 1998, unpagged, Section: “Macha”, Fall 2001. (See References and Author’s Note).

² Gulermovich Epstein, unpagged, Section: “Badb”.

³ Anne Baring, and Jules Cashford, The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image (Middlesex, England: Arkana (Penguin Group), 1991)203-205.

⁴ Baring, 82, ‘union transmitted to Celtic Culture’. Proinsias Mac Cana, Celtic Mythology (London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1970)19-20, ‘faculty for combining unity with diversity’.

⁵ Miranda Green, Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1992)10.

⁶ Green, Dictionary, 10.

⁷ Green, Dictionary, 10.

⁸ Green, Dictionary, 12.

⁹ Juliette Wood, map, The Celts: Life, Myth and Art (London: Duncan Barid Publishers, 1998)11.

¹⁰ Green, Dictionary, 12. Mac Cana, 11.

¹¹ Wood, 13. Green, Dictionary, 12.

¹² Green, Dictionary, 12. Mac Cana, 12.

¹³ Mac Cana, 12, “Vikings and Anglo-Saxons”. Peter Berresford Ellis,

Celtic Women: Women in Celtic Society and Literature (Grand Rapids,

Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996)96, "Early Christianity".

¹⁴ Green, 9,18. Mac Cana, 17. Wood, 107, 'oral tradition first written down'.

¹⁵ Wood, 8.

¹⁶ Mac Cana, 11.

¹⁷ Green, 13.

¹⁸ Wood, 9.

¹⁹ Wood, 9.

²⁰ Mac Cana, 14.

²¹ Wood, 13.

²² Wood, front cover liner.

²³ Mac Cana, 19.

²⁴ Wood, 121. Mac Cana, 14.

²⁵ Green, 18. For example, the three main cycles of Irish Prose tales: The

Mythological Cycle (Book of Invasions), Fionn Cycle (about the hero Finn and his associates), and the Ulster Cycle (The Cattle Raid of Cooley).

²⁶ Mac Cana, 16.

²⁷ Wood, 121.

²⁸ Wood, 121. Mac Cana, 32.

²⁹ Mac Cana, 32.

³⁰ Ellis, 111.

³¹ Ellis, 76.

³² Ellis, 79.

³³ Ellis, 41,71,78,80,82,83,85.

³⁴ Ellis, 40.

³⁵ Ellis, 94,101.

³⁶ Ellis, 15. Mary Condren, The Serpent and the Goddess: Women, Religion, and Power in Celtic Ireland (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989)154.

³⁷ Ellis, 40.

³⁸ Ellis, 106.

³⁹ Condren, 55.

⁴⁰ Ellis, 101.

⁴¹ Ellis, 81.

⁴² Ellis, 82.

⁴³ Ellis, 81-82.

⁴⁴ Ellis, 82.

⁴⁵ Ellis, 14.

⁴⁶ Ellis, 74.

⁴⁷ Wood, 132.

⁴⁸ Gulermovich Epstein, unpagged, Section: “Cath Muige Tuirech Cunga”.

⁴⁹ Ellis, 72,74.

⁵⁰ Ellis, 15,41,78.

⁵¹ Ellis, 14,78.

⁵² Ellis, 35.

⁵³ Ellis, 33. Gulermovich Epstein, unpagged, Sections: “Who is Morrigan”, “Mythological Tradition”, “Banshenchas”.

- ⁵⁴ Ellis, 33. Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Sections: “Mythological Tradition”, “Glosses and Glossaries”.
- ⁵⁵ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Mythological Tradition”.
- ⁵⁶ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Etymologies”.
- ⁵⁷ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Sections: “Mythological Tradition”, “Macha”, “Badb”, “Be Neit and Nemain”, “Etymologies”.
- ⁵⁸ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Sections: “Badb”, “Etymologies”.
- ⁵⁹ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Sections: “Badb”, “Etymologies”.
- ⁶⁰ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Cath Muige Turied Cunga”.
- ⁶¹ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Cath Muige Turied Cunga”.
- ⁶² Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Cath Muige Turied Cunga”.
- ⁶³ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Cath Muige Turied Cunga”.
- ⁶⁴ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Banshencha”.
- ⁶⁵ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Cath Muige Turied Cunga”.
- ⁶⁶ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Sections: “Mythological Traditions”, “Glosses and Glassaries”, “Cath Muige Turied”.
- ⁶⁷ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Macha”.
- ⁶⁸ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Badb”.
- ⁶⁹ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Conclusions”.
- ⁷⁰ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Sections: “Cath Muige Turied Cunga”, “Macha”.
- ⁷¹ Gulermovich Epstein (?). Original (2001) endnote source entry missing. Editing error. Also see Mac Cana (?). Supporting reference: current online

preview material (Gulermovich Epstein, 2004) reference to Celts devoured on the field by a goddess in the form of a carrion bird. (See Author's Note.)

⁷² Baring, 40-41,46-53,105.

⁷³ Ellis, 37.

⁷⁴ Mac Cana, 34.

⁷⁵ Wood, 9. Green, 22.

⁷⁶ Ellis, 21-22.

⁷⁷ Ellis, 23.

⁷⁸ Wood, 66.

⁷⁹ Wood, 66.

⁸⁰ Wood, 135.

⁸¹ Mac Cana, 55.

⁸² Wood, 94,96.

⁸³ Mac Cana, 33.

⁸⁴ Wood, 26-78.

⁸⁵ Condren, 70.

⁸⁶ Mac Cana, 32. Wood, 28.

⁸⁷ Mac Cana, 49.

⁸⁸ Mac Cana, 94. Ellis, 23,36,41. Condren, 26-27,29.

⁸⁹ Wood, 64-66.

⁹⁰ Gulermovich Epstein, unpagged, Section: "Conclusions".

⁹¹ Gulermovich Epstein, unpagged, Section: "Conclusions".

⁹² Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Sections: “Lebor Gabala”. ‘Morrigan, Macha, Badb, Anu/Danu, virtually interchangeable names in some contexts’, ‘Badb, Macha, Anu, Eriu, Fotla, Banba, daughters of Ernmas the sorceress’.

⁹³ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Etymologies”.

⁹⁴ Wood, 89. Condren, 31.

⁹⁵ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Daughters of Ernmas”.

⁹⁶ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Mythological Tradition”.

⁹⁷ Condren, 31.

⁹⁸ Condren, 30-31.

⁹⁹ Ellis, 33.

¹⁰⁰ Baring, 203-205.

¹⁰¹ Gulermovich Epstein, unpaged, Section: “Macha”.

¹⁰² Condren, 29. Ellis, 31.

¹⁰³ Condren, 23.

¹⁰⁴ Baring, 277-278.

¹⁰⁵ Baring, 273-298.

¹⁰⁶ Condren, 29. Ellis, 30.

¹⁰⁷ Condren, 23, 29. Green, 19.

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Author's Note:

With respect to the PhD. dissertation War Goddess: The Morrigan and her Germano-Celtic Counterparts by Angelique Gulermovich Epstein, the online material currently available (2004) is no longer identical to the material used in 2001 for this essay. The material accessed in the fall of 2001 was titled "War Goddess: The Morrigan and her Germano-Celtic Counterparts, A dissertation by Angelique Gulermovich Epstein" and was accessed using the Google search engine (celtic + myths + Macha). The original (2001) weblink no longer exists. The original material used for this essay was, however, accompanied by the following information:

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