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A B C  C L I O

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TRANS. Macbean, *Buchanan*.

FURTHER READING

ALBA; BIBLE; CHRISTIANITY; HIGHLANDS; SCOTTISH GAELIC POETRY.

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Bodb (later *Badb*, pl. *Badba*), 'scald-crow', was a designation for a supernatural female being associated with battle and slaughter in early IRISH LITERATURE. There are references to the *Bodb* or the *Badb*, a *badb* and several *badba*, therefore the designation may be both a proper name and a generic term for a supernatural battle creature. The *Badb* is sometimes identified with other supernatural women from early Irish narratives—the MORRÍGAN, (the) NEMAIN, Bé Néit (Woman of battle), or MACHA. At other times she is mentioned together with one or more of them as separate personalities. The battle association is explicit in the stock phrase in *bodb/badb catha*, 'the *Badb* of battle' (see e.g. TOCHMARC EMIRE §50; IN CATH CATHARDA lines 902, 5955).

The *Badb* appears in different forms in the tales: for instance, as a voice from the corpses on the battlefield (TÁIN BÓ CÚAILNGE, Recension I, line 498), as a red woman, an eel, a she-wolf, a heifer, and a black bird (Táin Bó Regamna, see §7 in the LEABHAR BUIDHE LEACÁIN version), as a red woman washing a chariot in a ford, and as a dark, lame, one-eyed woman (*Bruiden Da Choga* Recension B in TCD MS H.1.17), as a pale, fair woman (*Tochmarc Ferbe* in BL MS Egerton 1782). The figure of the *Badb* may be marked by asymmetry, the colours associated with her being red and pallor. The battle creatures called *badba* are likewise often described as being pale and their mouths as red. They are said to be hovering above a battlefield, where their shouts either incite or terrify the warriors. Bleeding *badba* with ropes around their necks are described in TOGAIL BRUIDNE DA DERGA (in the version in LEBOR NA HUIDRE). The *Badb* often functions as a harbinger of death by battle; thus she may appear as a so-called 'washer at the ford' or as an ominous visitor to a BRUIDEN (hostel), where she prophesies evil (*Bruiden Da Choga*; in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* one of the names of the ominous visitor *Cailb* is *Badb*). She may incite people to fight or terrify them, in her appearance as a single woman, in the company of her 'sisters' Bé Néit and Nemain, and as a group (*badba*) together with

similar battle creatures. The incitement is done in two ways: either by non-verbal cries or by a verbal message. When the aim is to inspire fear, non-verbal shrieks are uttered. The *Badb* (equated with the *Morrígan*) announces the victory in battle and prophesies the end of the world (CATH MAIGE TUÍRED §§166–7). The *Furies* and *Bellona* in the Latin source texts of TOGAIL NA TEBE (The destruction of Thebes) and *In Cath Catharda* (The civil war) have been adapted to the Irish context: their names have been 'translated' as *Badb* (*Badb catha* 'Badb of battle'). In general, the appearance of the *Badb* is an evil omen.

Bodb is also the name of a male supernatural being: *Bodb Derg* from *Síd ar Femin*, king of the *síde* of Munster (MUMU), who is famous for his knowledge (*Aislinge Oengusa*). His name is also mentioned in relationship to his swineherds, who cause battle and bloodshed (see *De Chophur in Dá Mucado*; and *Nár Túathcháech in Togail Bruidne Da Derga*). *Bodb Derg* is, moreover, a supernatural protector of Ireland (ÉRIU), together with the *Morrígan*, *Midir*, and *OENGUS MAC IND ÓC* (*Airne Fíngéin* §9).

In BRYTHONIC, there are numerous examples of the cognate word, Welsh *boddw* < Celtic **bodwo-*, as a high-status name element. The earliest occurs on COINAGE of the British IRON AGE with the legend BODVOC[-] (Van Arsdell, *Celtic Coinage of Britain* nos. 1052–1, 1057–1, c. 15–10 BC) < Celtic **Boduācos* (cf. D. Ellis Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names* 151). Early medieval examples include Archaic Welsh *Boduan* in the 7th- or early 8th-century charters appended to the Life of St CADOC, corresponding to Old Breton *Boduan*/*Bodguan* in the Cartulary of REDON (cf. also the uncommon Old Irish man's name *Bodbán*); Old Welsh *Gurbodu* in charter 229b (c. 878) in the Book of LLANDAF; *Elbodgu* and *Artbodgu map Bodgu* in the Old Welsh GENEALOGIES of BL MS Harley 3859, and St *Elbodug* (ELFODDW) mentioned in ANNALES CAMBRIAE at years 768 and 809. Note that *Bran*/*BRÂN* 'crow' also occurs as a man's name in mythological tales in both Irish and Welsh. Such names probably imply Brythonic traditions not merely of naming men after the crow, but rather wider supernatural associations along the lines of those better attested in Irish literature as canvassed above.

PRIMARY SOURCES

MSS. Dublin, Trinity College, H.1.17 (*Bruiden Da Choga* Recension B); London, BL, Egerton 1782 (*Tochmarc Ferbe*);