

Amadán Na Bruidhne

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Source: *Gadelica: A Journal of Modern Irish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1913), p. 271

Published by: Gadelica: A Journal of Modern Irish Studies

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30023364>

Accessed: 26-06-2016 17:35 UTC

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## MISCELLANEA

### *amadán na bruidhne*

Everyone acquainted with Irish folklore knows that *bruidhean* now means the fairy palace where the Tuatha Dé Danann or 'good people' dwell. But not everyone has heard of *amadán na bruidhne*, the name which in the folklore of parts of South Connacht is given to a mysterious being whose lightest touch causes certain death. There is hope for everyone who meets the other denizens of the *bruidhean*, but none for him who has met the *amadán*. But why *amadán*, which in ordinary use can mean only "fool"? I believe the word here is merely a folk-substitution for an older and obsolete word *amaid* or *aimid*. In an unpublished version of *Agallamh na Seanórach* I find that Caoilte is assailed at night by dreadful spectres whom he calls *amaiti*. In the same book as edited by O'Grady and Stokes we read of the origin of the name "Muine na nAmmaite": *nonbur ban ro boi ac ammaidecht ⁊ ní leicdis ben na fer uaithib gan marbadh*. For twenty years they destroyed the district they were in, until St. Patrick at last banished them. O'Grady in this passage renders *amait* by "madman," which Stokes corrects to "crone or witch." On the other hand the *amaiti* that tortured Caoilte were not women but men, being the four sons of Glas mac Mongaidh. The word also occurs several times in the *Cath Catharda*, where, for instance, Medea is called *primamait in domain*, and her witchcraft *ammaitecht*.

DOUGLAS HYDE.

### *fearas barr*

Mac Aingil has three examples of this in the sense of 'overplus, superabundance': p. 447, *do chráidheadar mórán naomh a ccurpa lé cruas crábhaidh, mar a dubhart san cheathramhadh rann don leabhrán; agus ní raidhi acht beagán fiach orra féin ré ná ndíol, mar nách deárnadar acht beagán peacadh, ⁊ dá bhrígh sin do chuaidh an fearas barr a nóirchísi na heaguiisi do dhíol ar son chiontadh na ccomharsan*; and p. 495, *foireadh bhar bhfearasbarrsa riachtanus cháich iondus go bhfoireadh a bhfearasbarrsan a ris bhar namhgarsa*—a translation of 2 Cor. viii. 14, "vestra abundantia illorum inopiam suppleat, ut et illorum abundantia vestrae inopiae sit supplementum." Probably *fearas barr* is the abstract of *fear barr* 'man of supremacies,' formed in the same way as *fearas léighinn* 'the profession of the *fear léighinn*;' so *fearas tighe*, *banas baile*, *fearacht choille*, *macacht ríogh*, etc. Such a meaning as 'a greater amount' (cf. *farasbár*, p. 176 supra) may easily be explained as developed from the earlier. In Dinneen's Dictionary the words are written *fearra is bárr*, which cannot be historically correct. The doublet *earr is bárr* may be due to popular association with *earr* 'tail,' 'end,' which would be natural in cases where *f* is lenited.

O. J. BERGIN.