

# celtic institute of the midwest

## reading and discussion group on

# women in the celtic world

### spring 2014

Celtic mythology is full of strong female characters: goddesses, queens, warriors, poets, seers, and even druids! But what was life really like for women in ancient and medieval Celtic societies? In this monthly reading group we will discuss how women are portrayed — and how they portray themselves — in Irish and Welsh mythology, poetry, law codes, saints' lives, and folklore spanning over two thousand years of Celtic history.

Our **Spring 2014** series focuses on the ancient Celtic world and on the stories of the Ulster cycle: epic tales of queens, kings, and warriors set at the dawn of Irish civilization. All works will be read in English translation!

#### I · celtic women in the ancient world: myths and realities

wednesday, february 26, 2014 · 7-9 pm · **Texts:** Ancient Celtic inscriptions · Classical authors on the Celts · **Topics:** Overview and introduction · Women and magic · The Celtic sovereignty goddess

#### II · queens and goddesses, mothers and wives

wednesday, march 26, 2014 · 7-9 pm · **Texts:** *The Wooing of Étaín* · Tales of the Ulster Cycle · **Topics:** Women and the Otherworld · Birth and rebirth · Marriage, property, and kingship in early Ireland

#### III · warriors and witches

wednesday, april 23, 2014 · 7-9 pm · **Texts:** *The Cattle Raid of Cooley (Táin Bó Cuailnge)* · **Topics:** Women, warriors, and women warriors · Women's rights and wrongs in Irish law · Celtic goddesses of war

#### IV · a woman's judgment

wednesday, may 28, 2014 · 7-9 pm · **Texts:** *The Tale of Macc Da Thó's Pig* · *Bricriu's Feast* · **Topics:** Female heroes and female villains · Battles of the sexes in Irish mythology · Christian scribes, pagan stories

**Course Fee:** \$80 for the full course (four sessions) or \$25 per session.

**Texts:** *War, Women, and Druids*, ed. and tr. Philip Freeman · University of Texas Press · ISBN 978-0292718364  
*Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, ed. and tr. Jeffrey Gantz · Penguin Classics · ISBN 978-0140443974  
*The Táin*, ed. and tr. Thomas Kinsella · Oxford University Press · ISBN 978-0199218783

Visit our website [www.celtic-institute.org](http://www.celtic-institute.org) for full course details and to download a **registration form**.



#### about the instructor

**Dr. Benjamin Bruch** has taught Celtic languages, literatures, folklore, mythology, and music to students of all ages at schools, colleges, and cultural events in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and Austria. He was made a bard of the Cornish Gorsedd in 1998 and received his Ph.D. in Celtic Languages and Literatures from Harvard University in 2005.



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