

According to J. W. Willis Bund: ‘a woman could never become a saint...a woman could never fill the office which certainly among the Welsh entitled a person to become a saint’. Is this a fair assessment of feminine sanctity in Wales? Analyse a range of extant sources that document the traditions associated with some of the female saints of Wales.

Female sanctity is something that many people are distinctly aware of. From the cult of the Virgin Mary, celebrated as the Mother of Christ, all the way to Mother Nature many of us are told to respect from the very moment we gain an understanding and comprehension of a language. We are innately brought up to perceive and understand feminine sanctity in various shapes and forms it takes. When we look at the world that surrounds us, we can see many examples of that innate approach in everyday actions, as depending on the culture one is brought up in, respect for women is something that either comes naturally or is drilled into a man as soon as possible. Respect for women is one of the qualities people look for when assessing the character of others, whether it is respect for their mother (a highly desirable quality), often justified as respect towards the gift of life itself, as regardless of the societal changes, the idea of the sacred powers of conception prevails to this day. This is a fine example of the source of sanctity in Wales, led by Saint Non, mother to none other than Saint David, patron saint of Wales himself. This itself takes us back to the root of sanctity in religions and beliefs that predate Christianity - the femininity itself and the aspects of a virgin and a mother, two stages of life considered sacred in many different cultures. When we look at the Saints these days, we see two main approaches to sainthood for women - they are either mothers, or virgins, sometimes, very rarely, both at the same time. Yet, despite all of this, despite the fact that female sanctity has always been innately interwoven into our society we come to the point of this essay - the words of J. W. Willis Bund, stating that based on social status and predominantly because of that, women were not made to be elevated to the status of a saint. This of course is directly contradicted not only by history but also by the extant sources that we currently have access to.

In *Dead Virgins: Feminine Sanctity in Medieval Wales* we can read that ‘until recently Welsh female saints were largely ignored, possibly because very few of their Lives are extant, but also because archaic views of a male-dominated Celtic Church have occasionally led to their dismissal’,¹ this paints a vastly different picture to J. W. Willis Bund’s words, as in this case, the cause is not social status, but rather an outdated ideology, which prevents women from sainthood not in a way of making it inaccessible to her, but rather by erasing her very existence. As severe as it may sound, this has not prevented any woman from achieving sainthood in Wales and if the extant sources are to be taken at face value, there are examples of female saints being worshipped throughout Wales. In this piece, we will take a closer look at the available sources and ascertain whether the titular words can be easily denied or if they are a fair assessment of the feminine sanctity in Wales.

¹ Jane Cartwright, ‘Dead Virgins: Feminine Sanctity in Medieval Wales’, *Medium Ævum*, Vol. 71, No. 1, (2002), 1-28 <DOI: 10.2307/43630386>.

Looking at the lives of saint women of Wales we can come to a couple of conclusions in regards to the 'path to sainthood' or desirable qualities that the mythos tells about when discussing the saint women. The three main aspects that the extant sources discuss are:

*Sacred lineage - this also refers to the aspect of a triad as the sources refer to the three saintly lineages of the Welsh saints. St Eliwedd was an example of a Saint that was considered one due to her lineage and mythos regarding her miracles were secondary to her saintly blood. Such an approach directly refers to the pre-Christian era and the 'Godly Families' as one could say, and fine examples of such families would be the Greek Gods or even the Egyptian Triads such as Isis, Osiris and Horus. This also, to a lesser extent refers to the root of Christian sanctity - the Holy Family of Mary, Joseph and Jesus and depending on the sources, the potential children of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. This of course is a legend in itself, nevertheless, the validity of the claim that such children existed and their sanctity based on the fact that they were fathered by Jesus, is equal in its historical nature to the Lives of Saints talking about resurrection or limbs reattachment, therefore, for the purpose of an example in this case can not be excluded.

*Virginity - This is another prevailing characteristic associated with Saintly women. In male-dominated societies Virginity takes on a vastly different role than in matriarchal structures. Patriarchy, which embellishes the strength and importance of a man, considers Virginity as a sign of strength by putting it in direct opposition to the "uncontrollable carnal desires" of men, not fearing the repercussions of creating a narrative in which men are, in a way, compared to a beast, these societies put Virginal Women on a pedestal as a sign of strength against the oppression of sexual desires, oftentimes painting them as saints, as only God's gift or intervention could have given them strength to stay pure. This idea of sanctity is different to the one held by matriarchal societies.

*Motherhood - This is a rare but recurring theme in Christian Saints, deeply rooted in the pre-Christian "pagan" era of beliefs and worship of Goddess Mother, focusing solely on the women's power of conception and ability to bring new life into the world. In the case of Christian Saints (Predominantly Mary and Non), we see this interwoven with the aspect of virginity and purity, where conception, birth and motherhood are almost necessities, dictated by God himself, as to achieve the desired result - the birth of a male saint - be it Jesus or St Dafydd. This, of course, strongly downplays the sacredness of the womanhood itself but rather takes its prevailing strength to perpetuate such a belief from the idea that if the result is sacred, so in return must be the vessel, a belief that can be seen across different cultures, in different forms, be it as Holy Grail or even relics of the saints (oftentimes the object that holds the relic is considered equally holy to the relic itself, through the idea of association and direct connection)

Therefore, upon fulfilment of one or more of the above characteristics one could begin to be considered Saintly. It was those characteristics that, in line with strong faith and being beloved by God, allowed the Saint to perform miracles that would further their reputation and increase their following, it was the driving force or, in a way, a source of energy for the women Saint that validated their ability to do so. Vastly different, of course, to the male saints, as seen through various recollections, the lives of male saints were

scarcely ignored or contradicted, yet when it came to female saints, for the extant sources to confirm their womanhood, there had to be an undeniable root cause connecting them to a male saint, that has consecrated, in the eye of the person recording the lives of saints, that the woman was surely saintly.

One of the prime examples of female sanctity in Wales would be St Non, the Mother of St Dafydd, Patron Saint of all Wales, whose current feast day is on the 3rd of March,² even though she is not listed in the *Roman Catholic Liturgical Calendar for Wales*,³ It is sufficient to say that even after her death and through her worship, she is connected with her son, St David whose feast day falls on the 1st of March.⁴ This close association is very evident in her current worship, as most times she is mentioned through her connection to her own son, very reminiscent of the cult of the Virgin Mary, whose prayers oftentimes include mentions of her son Jesus.

Her story is recorded in the Life of Saint David, recorded by the monk Rhygyfarch in the 11th century as well as various pieces of prose and her existence can be seen in mediaeval sites of worship dedicated to her, but as with most saints and especially female saints, their traditions were predominantly passed orally, but are extant because of written record about a male saint associated with them (similar to St Eluned). St Non plays a particular role in this piece, as depending on the source she was a woman of a noble origin (thus in a position of power), but at the same time, it is universally accepted that she was a nun. The Editors of St David's Cathedral elaborate on the matter, stating that naming St David's mother as Non, or a nun may very well have been a way of describing Dafydd's lineage as appropriate for a saint, without giving us exact details.⁵ This complicates the matter when it comes to establishing the qualifying criteria for St Non to have been perceived as a Saint in regards to whether her position played any role in it. If the extant sources are to be taken literally, the image of St Non is that of a woman stripped of any rights or power, as she was assaulted by the local ruler Sant of Ceredigion - the act of conception being forced upon her and her serving merely as a vessel, therefore she was a woman of no position who achieved sainthood. Her story can be likened to that of the Virgin Mary, on which her legend draws heavily upon. Mary was a daughter of two priests, a virgin, living a simple life (according to the Bible), therefore her life was not that much different to the life of Non - both came from powerful lineage but decided to dedicate their lives to God, the difference, of course, lies in the method of conception (that is if the immaculate conception is to be taken literally rather than metaphorically). Another similarity may be found in the portrayal of both of these women - a statue of St Non in the Grotto next to St Non's well and the statues of the Virgin Mary. Many people would find it hard to distinguish one from the other, showing similarities in the perception of these two. Both gave birth to

² Catholic Online, *St. Non*, N.A., <https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4362> [accessed 23 April 2023].

³ Liturgy Office England & Wales, *National Calendar For Wales*, N.A <<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/National/Wales2.shtml>> [accessed 20 April 2023]

⁴ Liturgy Office England & Wales, *National Calendar For Wales*, N.A <<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/National/Wales2.shtml#March>> [accessed 20 April 2023].

⁵ St David's Cathedral, *Who Is St Non*, N.A, <<https://www.stdavidscathedral.org.uk/discover/history/St-Non>> [accessed 24 April 2023].

Holy Man whose mission was to save people - either globally or locally. Both births were prophesied and both of these men came to replace one that was there before them. In the case of Jesus, it was St John, in the case of St David it was St Patrick. Putting aside biblical similarities, the legend of St Non serves the purpose of showing that even though one may be put in a dangerous situation that strips them of their dignity, strength and ultimately irreversibly changes their life, they may still achieve greatness for as long as they stay true to their values and destiny. Looking at how strong the cult of St Non is and the importance of it we should omit her origins for the sake of this discussion and focus only on her portrayal to ascertain whether J. W. Willis Bund was right and in this case, the extant sources say otherwise.

San Ffraid is another example of a Virgin Saint confirmed by the sources and the surviving worship and belief, her feast day is celebrated on the 1st of February,⁶ and the current traditions associated with San Ffraid often overlap with the Pagan Worship of Goddess Brigit (the celebration of Imbolc, one of the 8 Great Pagan festivals as laid out by the Wheel of the Year). Worship of San Ffraid in Wales is documented through extant sources, place names and different churches, and it is through the tradition of this Saint in Wales we can draw a conclusion that San Ffraid and Saint Brigid of Kildare, an Irish Saint are so intricately connected that one can only come to the conclusion that they are one and the same. San Ffraid or St Brigid the Virgin is, as mentioned above, oftentimes connected to the Celtic Goddess Brigit with whom she shares close connection and characteristics. For the sake of this essay, we will disregard the potential connections between the Saint and the Goddess and focus strictly on the traditions and the documented life of a Saint. According to the extant sources San Ffraid has travelled from Ireland and settled in Wales, a direct opposition to St Patrick's move from Wales to Ireland. Her presence and worship in Wales, as an innately Welsh Saint with roots in Ireland can be seen through prose, a sermon and mediaeval poems, including a *Marwnad* in which the saint is called upon.⁷ This, whilst not directly doing so, confirms the "Welshness" of the Saint, as during mediaeval times the Saints were expected to be local or locally connected. G. H. Doble discusses that it would be hard for a woman to travel far in order to spread her reputation.⁸ Upon establishing this, we will move on to discussing the Sainthood of San Ffraid and her fulfilment of the qualifying criteria, as well as whether the words of Willis Bund ring true in this case or not.

The Church in Llanon Llansanffraid is a twofold extant source for the existence of the Saint and the tradition associated with her. In the Church itself, dedicated to St Non and San Ffraed (alternative spelling of the name) we can see a beautiful stained glass depicting both of these saints. The picture of San Ffraid is that of a woman, dressed modestly, almost nun-like, with a cattle behind her, drawing an association between the saint and the farm animals. Yet when we take into account the stained glass and the poems associated with San Ffraed, we may arrive at the conclusion that she was not only holding patronage over the

⁶ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, *St. Brigid Of Ireland*, 2022, <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Brigit-of-Ireland>> [accessed 24 April 2023].

⁷ Iorwerth Fynglwyd, *Marwnad Iorwerth Fynglwyd*, Gwaith Iorwerth Fynglwyd, p. 98–99.

⁸ Jane Cartwright, 'Dead Virgins: Feminine Sanctity in Medieval Wales', *Medium Ævum*, Vol. 71, No. 1, (2002), 1-28 (p.2) <DOI: 10.2307/43630386>.

cattle but also their utility in travels, as the travellers would call upon her for her blessing (as evidenced by the poem in the Black Book of Carmarthen).⁹ Another aspect that serves as source material in this case would be the place-name itself - Llansanffraid, meaning The Church of Saint Bride - this being St Brigid or San Ffraed respectively. This is often the case with St Ffraed in Wales, the majority of the tradition and culture is recorded in the place-names and dedicated places such as Churches or Holywells, that being the case, there is no doubt that San Ffraed was worshipped in mediaeval Wales.

St Ursula is one of the most well-known saints in Wales, and in this particular case, her tradition and legend are filled with controversy. St Ursula was an early Welsh Saint whose origins are often contested, as some of the sources claim she was British.¹⁰ Her story is that of a Martyr, who died alongside eleven thousand virgins (the number is thought to be different),¹¹ in Cologne, where her bones are laid to rest alongside her companions. The virgins themselves are not named, apart from eleven of them in the *Missal at Essen* which names them as Ursulæ, Sentia, Gregoria, Pinnosæ, Marthæ, Saulæ, Britulæ, Saturnina, Rabacia, Saturia and Palladia,¹² 'The same eleven names occur in the Cologne codex of 950-1000, but in a different order.'¹³ Among those names, which can also put into question whether it was eleven thousand or simply eleven virgins, is the name Ursulæ, suggesting that St Ursula was among the Virgins mentioned by the text. Ursula, according to the legend was a daughter of a King,¹⁴ this means that, regardless of the position she would hold herself, she was a woman of power, capable of swaying the King and his opinion, as mentioned in the legend.¹⁵ The story tells of a voyage through the sea, an idea proposed by St Ursula to avoid being given away to a pagan ruler and ends with the arrival of the Virgins and Ursula in Cologne, at the time under the rule of the Huns, who immediately upon the arrival of the vessels slaughtered St Ursula and the Virgins.¹⁶ In the later version of the story from *Regante Domino*, authorised by the Holy See, Ursula is described more as a leader of those that arrived via the Sea, than simply a person whose idea it was, 'Ursula all the while encouraging them and leading them to victory.'¹⁷ The phrasing which states that Ursula was leading them to victory suggests a position of power, as even in this day and age, it is people in a position of power that lead others, when we connect this with the early Celtic times and the accounts by Julius Caesar for example, we arrive at the conclusion that Ursula very well may have been a leader. Her sainthood, as with other female saints, with the exception of Gwenfrewy, does not originate from her position, but from her purity and virginity. In essence, St Ursula was killed as a consequence of her attempt to retain her purity and faith, as without her opposition to the idea of being married to a pagan leader, she would have

⁹ Williams F Skene, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1868), p. 479.

¹⁰ Sabine Baring-Gould and John Fisher, *St Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins*, *The Lives Of The British Saints Vol IV.*, (London: The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion) p.318.

¹¹ Baring-Gould and Fisher, *St Ursula*, p. 318.

¹² Baring-Gould and Fisher, *St Ursula*, p. 319.

¹³ Baring-Gould and Fisher, *St Ursula*, p. 319.

¹⁴ Baring-Gould and Fisher, *St Ursula*, p. 321.

¹⁵ Baring-Gould and Fisher, *St Ursula*, p. 321.

¹⁶ Baring-Gould and Fisher, *St Ursula*, p. 322.

¹⁷ Baring-Gould and Fisher, *St Ursula*, p. 327.

not introduced the idea of the voyage, saving not only her life but the lives of the Virgins accompanying her as well. The aspect of the Virgins that were her companions serves the additional purpose of emphasising her own purity and dedication to Christ.

St Gwenfrewy (also St Winefride, St Gwenfrewi) was a virgin martyr who lived in the 7th century. She was a daughter of the chieftain of Tegeingl and a niece of St Beuno. To avoid her suitor - Caradog, St Gwenfrewy decided to become a nun, an act that infuriated Caradog and ultimately led to her decapitation. It is said that in the place her head fell a holy spring sprang forth.¹⁸ St Gwenfrewy was then resurrected by St Beuno by him reattaching her head to her body. She joined the covenant in Holywell, which she later left the covenant and became the Abbess at Gwytherin, therein obtaining a position of power, which is further depicted by her statue located at the Holywell, a depiction in which she can be seen holding a pastoral staff (crosier), which in itself is a symbol of power and leadership, mostly associated with bishops and cardinals, but also used by the Abbesses to represent the guidance they provide to their following.



Fig. 1 Statue of St Gwenfrewy at the well in Holywell.¹⁹

St Gwenfrewy is one of the most important female Welsh saints, and as a female, one of the oldest documented saints to be worshipped in Wales. To this day St Gwenfrewy is worshipped in Wales, with her official feast day being the 3rd of November, as dictated by

¹⁸ Rice Reese, *An Essay On The Welsh Saint Or The Primitive Christians Usually Considered To Have Been The Founders Of Churches In Wales*, 1836 (London:Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans) P. 295.

¹⁹Nabokov, *Candles Burning In Front Of A Statue Of St Winefride*, [photograph], 2009, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Winefride%27s_Well#/media/File:Holywell7.JPG>[accessed 24 April 2023].

the Roman Catholic Liturgical Calendar for Wales.²⁰ Further to this Janet Bord wrote an article describing her visit to St Winefride's Well at Holywell, describing the preparations and the celebration of the National Catholic pilgrimage to the well, which according to her took place on a "Sunday immediately following 22 June".²¹ She then proceeds to describe the number of people attending the pilgrimage, counting two thousand of them in total. The pilgrims then "gather in the town and walk in procession down the hill to the well, following priests carrying aloft banners, a statue of St Winefride, and a reliquary containing a small piece of bone",²² this is then followed by a mass and a blessing of those suffering from illnesses, once again with the usage of the relic containing a piece²³ of St Winefride. Taking into consideration the year in which Janet Bord visited St Winefride's well, which was 1993, the cult seems to have grown in its intensity over the years. This of course very well may be due to the increase in population, and the fact that the 1990s were known for increased spiritual needs, as people were afraid of the end of the millennium, this does not diminish the fact that the cult of St Gwenfrewy remained strong through all those years.

St Gwenfrewy is a particular example when looking to dispute the statement that women were incapable of becoming a saint in Wales due to their inability to hold a position of power. She fulfils multiple requirements that are often associated with saints, she was a virgin, a martyr who initially died protecting her purity, she came from a saintly lineage, as her uncle was a saint in his own right, she was a nun, therefore not only pure, but further dedicated to her faith, but the most important factor in this case is her position as the Abbess. The Abbess is capable of spreading their beliefs among their congregation, she has a following and is in charge of the everyday lives of the nuns under her care. This put St Gwenfrewy in a particular position, which very well may have resulted in her being worshipped very shortly after her burial in c. 635,²⁴ as evidenced by the remains of an 8th century reliquary - the Arch Gwenfrewi,²⁵. This both contradicts and confirms the words of Willis Bund, it also contradicts them. St Gwenfrewi became a saint, most likely due to her position as the Abbess of Gwytherin, therefore because of her position of power, but that in itself is a contradiction of the titular words of this essay, as she held the position of power as a woman.

St Elunde is a saint mentioned and documented by Gerald of Wales in *The Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin Through Wales*, where he describes her as a daughter of Brachanus, father to twenty-four female saints, mentioning that 'there are many churches in Wales distinguished by their names',²⁶ he goes on to describe the church of St Almedda (Eliwedd),

²⁰ Liturgy Office England & Wales, *National Calendar For Wales*, N.A

<<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/National/Wales2.shtml#November>> [accessed 20 April 2023].

²¹ Janet Bord, *St Winefride's Well, Holywell, Clwyd*, Folklore Vol. 105, 1994, (London: Taylor & Francis, Ltd.) p. 98.

²² Janet Bord, *St Winefride's Well, Holywell, Clwyd*, p. 98.

²³ Janet Bord, *St Winefride's Well, Holywell, Clwyd*, p. 98.

²⁴ The People's Collection of Wales, *Arch Gwenfrewi*, 2012,

<<https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/43867#?xywh=-1430%2C0%2C5027%2C2908>>[accessed 20 April 2023].

²⁵ The People's Collection of Wales, *Arch Gwenfrewi*.

²⁶ Gerald of Wales, *The Itinerary Of Archbishop Baldwin Through Wales*, 2015,

<<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1148/1148-h/1148-h.htm>> [accessed 20 April 2023], p. 29.

named so after the “holy virgin”,²⁷ According to him, St Eliwedd refused to be married and instead promised herself to God, running away from her suitor and seeking shelter in different places, she ultimately died a martyr and celebrated her feast day at the beginning of August.²⁸ Gerald of Wales associates her with a multitude of miracles, both beneficial to people who worship her and others not so much. He mentions that people would travel far to ask for health and were so healed ‘through the merits of the Blessed Virgin’,²⁹ he also mentions miracle of another kind,

*You may see men or girls, now in the church, now in the churchyard, now in the dance, which is led round the churchyard with a song, on a sudden falling on the ground as in a trance, then jumping up as in a frenzy, and representing with their hands and feet, before the people, whatever work they have unlawfully done on feast days;*³⁰

This presents a different picture of a saint than the one we are used to. People, when thinking about saints and their miracles, think of healing powers (which St Eliwedd was known for according to Gerald of Wales), blessings, and an ability to fix the wrong in their life. In this case, we see a saintly punishment, dealt to those perceived as sinners, regardless of their age or gender. This of course, is explained as a way to correct the wrongful ways, ‘Thus, by the divine mercy, which rejoices in the conversion, not in the death, of sinners, many persons from the conviction of their senses, are on these feast days corrected and mended.’³¹ Gerald’s entry serves as proof that the cult of St Eliwedd was not only thriving many centuries after her death, but also that it was local, something that can be associated with Welsh Saints.

Regarding her position, Eliwedd, by running away from her home has effectively relinquished any rights she might have as a daughter of a king, she began a journey of solitude, one during which she was at the mercy of fate. This makes it very clear that she held no position and held no power, yet her sainthood was not only clear to everyone but also strong enough to survive centuries.

When we assess the above information, we can easily come to a few realisations.

The first one is the fact, that the majority of the relatively well-documented female Welsh saints are either associated with a male Saint or come from a Saintly lineage, this being respectively - St David for St Non (Nonnita), St Beuno for St Winefride (Gwenfrewy), St Eliwedd being a fruit of a Welsh line of saints, both male and female.

Secondly, we can realise that all of the female saints, with the exception of St Non, were Virgins and martyrs, the recurring theme in their legends being the runaway bride that promised herself and her purity to God. This in turn tells us a lot about the Welsh society at the time, considering the emphasis put on purity, modesty and faith, we can clearly see that the Welsh society was male-dominated, as so is such a narrative.

²⁷ Gerald of Wales, *The Itinerary Of Archbishop Baldwin Through Wales*, p. 29.

²⁸ Gerald of Wales, *The Itinerary Of Archbishop Baldwin Through Wales*, p. 29.

²⁹ Gerald of Wales, *The Itinerary Of Archbishop Baldwin Through Wales*, p.29-30.

³⁰ Gerald of Wales, *The Itinerary Of Archbishop Baldwin Through Wales*, p.29.

³¹ Gerald of Wales, *The Itinerary Of Archbishop Baldwin Through Wales*, P. 30.

Thirdly, we can clearly see, that with the exception of St Winefried, and partially St Ursula, the saintly women held no position of power and had very little say when it came to their own life, they had to fight if they disagreed with the choices made for them and used God as a shield against those that wished to bend them to their will.

Looking at the above points we can see what role a female saint served in the Mediaeval Welsh Society - their stories were meant to provide strength to not only women but also men who felt no control over their own life. Their local worship and places named after them suggest strong emotional connections between people and the saint they worshipped, almost akin to people asking the saint for their protection.

The above examples of Saints therefore serve as a rejection of the idea posed by J. W. Willis Bund, and as mentioned above the thesis itself is directly opposed by the function fulfilled by the female saints in Mediaeval Wales, whilst it was clearly easier to be classified as a Saint when one held position of power, as this allowed them to be known by people and their very actions were spoken of, it was neither a requirement nor a recurring theme in female saints of Wales. Alternatively, one should say that it was the blood, and the circumstances, rather than the very nature of the person, that made them a saint. All of these women were forced to run and all of them were wronged by men and sought shelter and protection in their faith, this in the eyes of people made them saints, the ability to withstand the brutality or to oppose it, the female saints, therefore, are more of a metaphor for strength rather than historical figures in high positions.

Taking into consideration the difference in the number of male and female saints in Welsh tradition, we arrive at the final assessment of the question posed for this essay and the answer depends on how we look at the question itself. If the question is to be understood as the position of power being the only way to achieve sainthood for women, then the answer would be not, such an assessment is neither fair, nor appropriate given the strength and worship of the saints mentioned above, but when we look at the question in the parameters of limitation, rather than prohibition, we arrive at a different conclusion. The number of female saints that are well known and whose traditions and worship, rather than just place-names survive to this day, is very limited, therefore we can not say that the position did not have any say in achieving sainthood. That being said, the question posed was a blanket statement and has to be considered as such, therefore the titular question posed for this essay is not a fair assessment of female sanctity in Wales although it raises a good point and highlights a possible cause of the limited number of female saints worshipped nowadays in Wales.

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