



Celtic Sanctity, Spirituality and Hagiography

CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF ST PETROC

Jane Bennett

2409710



Table of Contents

<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>- 3 -</i>
<i>Critical Appreciation</i>	<i>- 4 -</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>- 11 -</i>
<i>Reference List.....</i>	<i>- 13 -</i>
<i>Appendices</i>	<i>- 16 -</i>
Appendix 1: Places dedicated to St Petroc	- 16 -
Appendix 2: Gotha Manuscript.....	- 18 -
Appendix 3: St Petroc standing in cold water.....	- 19 -
Appendix 4: Authenticity of Lives	- 20 -
Appendix 5: Peaceful assimilation of natives	- 21 -
Appendix 6: Binding of St Samson's hands.....	- 22 -
Appendix 7: Translation of 'Bodmin'	- 23 -
Appendix 8: Statue of St Petroc and the stag at Lopérec in Cornuouille	- 24 -
Appendix 9: Brother Roger of Taizé	- 25 -
Appendix 10: St Petroc as Cumbrian.....	- 27 -

Critical Appreciation of St Petroc

Introduction

St Petroc is the most prolifically written about saint in Kernow (Cornwall), however, interestingly, he is not the patron saint of the Celtic nation, that honour being bestowed upon St Piran. Likely of Welsh descent, most *Lives*, hagiographies, have St Petroc travelling to Ireland before settling, or resettling, in Kernow. The different accounts of his life will be looked at, recorded and examined for their provenance and feasibility. Some possess similar themes whilst others have their own versions of certain events. Travels to different countries are one such debated point.

These lives of the saints were written for specific purposes, which, again, varied on the readership they were intended for. Who they were written by and who they were written for will be explored. How these works were portrayed to different audiences has a direct bearing on the phrasing used and topics emphasised. Similarly, today an audience is written and spoken to accordingly.

There being many Saints and dedicated places of worship, including wells, both in Britain and Brittany (Appendix 1), it could be surprising how little is known about some of their lives until the wider history of the church and politics are looked into. Changes in monarchy and political allegiances has had dramatic effects on churches, monasteries, priests and the laity throughout history.

Critical Appreciation

The Lives of saints were written at different times, by different people, for different purposes. Some were written by close, familiar monks whereas others, mostly, were written to a formula and idealised the lives or invented events for the written biographies. Being looked at in this Critical Appreciation is St Petroc.

In Ireland there are more than one hundred saints' Lives still in existence relating to around sixty different saints (Sharpe, 1991), a remarkable figure of surviving literature. The *Vita Petroci* from the twelfth century, written six centuries after the Saint, was the original record of St Petroc's Life (Cornwall Calling, 2024). Petroc is recorded as the apostle of all the old kingdom of Dumnonia, Kernow, Devon and Somerset (Kessler, 2024), and pan-Celtic saint, covering Kernow, Wales and Brittany (Doble, 1965, p.132).

In Britain the order was given in 1549-50 to deface then burn the service books, Breviaries and Legendae; the latter held accounts of local Saints which would have been read aloud on their respective feast days in their dedicated churches and also at mealtimes in monasteries as homilies (C-Borlase, 1878, p.9). This resulted in Kernow losing its Saints' written heritages. However, two accounts of St Petroc's Life have survived abroad, though contradictory in places.

The first Life, although written in Bodmin (Orme, 2007, p.123), was saved from Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries being discovered in Brittany, which, of itself, had no culture of writing Lives (Jankulak, 2000, p.74). Whilst not especially venerated there, the Saint, known in Breton as *Pereg* or *Perec* (Jankulak, 2000, p.73), did have a connection to St Méen, found in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* from 1898 published by the Société des Bollandistes, now accessible on the internet.

The second Life, as it is known, was found in the 20th century, the Gotha Manuscript (Doble, 1965, p.133). Longer than the first it differs in some details (Pearse, 2024).

The Gotha Life is recorded as written at Bodmin monastery by a retired monk of thirty years with his purpose to honour his patron. Doble tells of the monk using old documents which included unbelievable events, continuing on and saying how he had heard some of the information and spoken to an honourable monk who had personally seen some of the events (Doble, 1965, p.134; Appendix 2). This can be perceived as the author trying to portray the authenticity of his writing on St Petroc.

The Gotha manuscript begins with the Life of St Petroc, “followed by a metrical Life, based on the prose Life, and by a series of Miracles” (Doble, 1965, p.134). It sets itself out as a verified, full account which is then abbreviated in the Breton Life, which contained no such introduction by its author (Jankulak, 2000, p.4). Including an account, rarely seen in this period of Celtic history, of the theft of St Petroc’s bones, *De reliquiarum furto*, and removal to St Méen (Jankulak, 2000, p.1). This theft is also mentioned in the historic narratives of Henry II by Roger de Hoveden, *Chronica* and *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi* (Jankulak, 2000, p.33). The Gotha manuscript also included Lives of other saints known in Kernow, such as its patron saint, St Piran (Jankulak, 2000, p.3). St Petroc is also mentioned in one other Life, the Life of the Welsh Saint Cadoc, *Vita I Cadoci*, presented as that Saint’s Uncle, as supported by the Gotha Manuscript’s genealogy (Jankulak, 2000, p.10). The Irish tradition mentions St Petroc as *Patrocus* under the fourth of June, identified in the other Lives as when he died and is remembered (Jankulak, 2000, p.15).

Some biographers, like Boswell, carried around a notebook with him in order to record all he saw (Taylor, 1916, p.97). The lives of even the greatest of saints can appear mundane to an audience. Looking at St Petroc, he spent every day standing in a cold stream praying (Russian True Orthodox Church, 2019; Appendix 3), as did St Dyfnog (Baring-Gould, 1908, p.397), however the congregated masses did not want to hear just that, they wanted to hear of miraculous healings and travels to far off lands.

Whilst parts of the Lives are fact, other parts are embellished. The act of St Cadoc and Moses (C-Borlase, 1878, p.13) and water springing forth is a similar incident to one performed by St Patrick and other saints. It is known, as will be seen, that some of the Lives were written to a script with just the name being replaced and local place names inserted. William Borlase collected as many local Saint's legends as he could in the 1750s and put them together into a manuscript. His descendent, William Copeland Borlase, gave the President's address to the Royal Institution of Cornwall on the thirty first of May in 1878, later published as a book. He spoke of the Saints' Lives that were written during the eleventh and twelfth centuries as being composed with a political purpose of the Norman invaders to provide Lives invoking local names, places and legends in order to placate the conquered country, quoting the testimony of St Bernard (C-Borlase, 1878, p.11; Appendix 4).

It is not the case though, that all these Lives are to be dismissed as pure fiction because, as already stated, some are based on true events and local histories. It is just that not every word can be taken as fact.

As touched upon in detail at the start of this critical appreciation, the written Lives of these important local Saints were destroyed during the 1540s' English Reformation (C-

Borlase, 1878, p.9). Their rewriting after the Norman invasion to ingratiate themselves with the subjugated population was likely to have been a political move to gain cooperation from the population and quell any potential resentment (Brown, 2021, p.17). The writings on St Petroc are no exception to this. Being a foreigner himself, most likely Welsh (Lapa, 2014), it would portray the favourability of some invaders and show that they could be accepted. Often in this period Saints were seen as genealogically coming from Wales, studying in Ireland, making pilgrimage to Rome and sometimes India before settling in Kernow, Petroc is no exception (Jankulak, 2000, p.1). Using local histories, legends, names and places and weaving them into something the locals could be convinced was their own was an incisive move; Petroc's Lives sited themselves extensively in the local landscape (Jankulak, 2000, p.6). Giving a lost people an identity and a history, even if partly untrue, can restore a sense of self worth and belonging. It could be easier then for the invaders to work with their subjects rather than to force them, as practiced by the Anglo-Saxon King Athelstan (Brown, 2021, p.19, Appendix 5).

Saints Lives would have been known abroad and far across Britain, many travelled across to Brittany along with the Saints themselves, and these versions, as previously mentioned, could be compared and copied back to the lost Cornish. National identity and national pride cannot be underestimated to a Celtic nation, as seen by the resurrection of the Gorsedh in Kernow by Henry Jenner who became its first grand Bard at Boscawen-Un on the twenty first of September 1928, (Williams, 2004, p.34).

The Saints all had their own dedicated feast days, St Petroc's being the fourth of June and his shrine being St Petroc's church in Bodmin (Lapa, 2014). On these days locals

and pilgrims would gather and honour the saint, a version of their Life would be read out to the crowd before feasting commenced. With some of the more remote churches, pilgrimages would be made to the dedicated church for the patronal festival.

There are many themes in the Lives of St Petroc, the Gotha manuscript, being longer, has more. Some of the same instances also seem to differ between that and the St Méen version (believed to have been composed in Bodmin). He is generally accepted, as recorded by Lapa (2014), to be the son of a Welsh King, schooled as a boy in Kernow, but rejected the throne and went to study at a monastery in Ireland for 20 years. When he left, with a small group of followers, the first miracle occurred with the same barely seaworthy boat being on the shore ready for them. A remarkable wind took them to land at Trebetherick on the River Camel, Kernow. The accounts begin to diverge, as one has St Samsom spying their crossing and praying for a safe landing. The other account misses that but shares the miracle of striking the rock for water, fieldworkers quenching their thirst too. Being firstly hostile to the sailors, Baring-Gould records (1913, p.96) “Alford, citing Capgrave, says that these harvesters were Saxons” and therefore not from Kernow. The texts again diverge, as one has St Petroc praying to meet St Samson who was tilling the ground until stiffened by God and the other that St Samson was fleeing from St Petroc until stiffened by God. Another version (Baring-Gould, 1913, p.97; Appendix 6) has Samson unable to move his hands. The two met happily and Samson pointed Petroc to a small hermitage. Led by God, the hermit left but asked that it be named after himself, Wethinoc. It was after St Petroc’s death when it was renamed Petroc stow, now Padstow (Lapa, 2014). The presence of St Samson is noted in both Lives, however, only the Gotha manuscript ties him with St Samson of Dol in Brittany

(Jankulak, 2000, p.7), with the St Méen Life having him become an Archbishop in Brittany which is not mentioned in the later found Life (Jankulak, 2000, p.8). The texts are in alignment as St Petroc retreated further into the woods and founded a more remote hermitage at Little Petherick. The monks kept busy founding an oratory and mill, carrying heavy stones on their backs daily. This custom is repeated to his grave at his patronal festival. St Petroc also founded a monastery at Bodmin, literally translating similarly to 'dwelling of monks' (Lapa, 2014; Padel, 1985, p.163; Olson, 1989, p.55; Appendix 7).

Petroc felt the calling to go to Jerusalem and left his founded hermitages to set off on his pilgrimage. It is here the texts diverge further, and, it would appear, more fiction than fact enters the writings, and is referred to as a *vita suspecta* by the Bollandists (Doble, 1965, p.136). They both have a storm and St Petroc foretelling fine weather for the following day. Upon waking to a continuation of the storm St Petroc felt he had wronged God and therefore needed to make the pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem. Having visited these Holy sites, as many other Saint's stories do, St Petroc then saw a silver bowl floating towards him, on getting into it he was transported to a remote Indian island where he lived for seven years. Living on the same single fish which swam into the shore each day. All this mirrored the Life of Saint Brendan (Jankulak, 2000, p.6). He was transported back the same way and a wolf had lain guard over his staff and robe. St Petroc, it is agreed then travelled back to Britain with the wolf. Some accounts have him visiting Bardsey and other places around Wales and Devon before returning to Kernow. More miracles of healing and removing a splinter from a dragon ensued and the prevention of King Constantine killing a deer he was hunting (Appendix 8), some just

have an 'influential man' (Jankulak, 2000, p.17) or a 'rich man', as in the St Méen Life with nineteen soldiers, whereas the Gotha Manuscript has twenty four (Doble, 1965, p.143). 'King' Constantine and his guard spent a few days with St Petroc and were converted to Christianity. St Petroc, like many Saints before and after him, including St Francis of Assisi, was a friend to animals.

Knowing he was near death, St Petroc undertook one final journey to bid farewell to his monasteries and hermitages. However, between Nanceventon and Lanwethinoc his health failed him and he passed away, around AD 590 to AD 595, after some days in a house at Trerovel (Lapa, 2014). The loss of their founder would have affected the monks but they would have carried on, similar to the modern monastery of Taizé after the murder of their founder Brother Roger (Phillips, 2005; Appendix 9). His remains were laid to rest in the monastery at Bodmin. The St Méen Life records the date of St Petroc's death whereas the Gotha Manuscript includes the information above of his final journey and place of death and subsequent burial (Jankulak, 2000, p.10).

That Petroc existed seems to be a non-contested fact, born in AD 468, however, where it starts to diverge is relating to his ethnicity. He is named as the son of Glywys, King of Glywysing, in South Wales in the *Vita Cadoci*, and left Wales for Bodmin, Kernow. The same entry by Baring-Gould (1913) has an alternative story in the Welsh Pedigrees that he was Pedrog, son of Clement, a Cornish Regulus. A third proposition is recorded that John of Tynemouth places him as 'Natione Cumber', William of Worcester following with 'Cumbrorum' (Baring-Gould, 1913, p.95; Appendix 10). The names Peter, Petroc and Pedrog all seem interchangeable at this time and for William of Worcester to be led to believe that Petroc was from Cumberland by John of Tynemouth's use of the word

Cumbria, which could be a corruption or mistype of Cambria in Wales, this would bring these seemingly opposing statements together and place Petroc as Welsh born but lived a lot of his life in Kernow.

Another debated fact is the removal of St Petroc's remains from Bodmin in AD 1177, recorded in the Gotha Manuscript, by stealth to St Méen in Britany. That they were taken is not in question, King Henry of Britain, son of Empress Matilda, got embroiled in the affair to have the relics returned. Some accounts have the relics inspected and returned intact (Baring-Gould, 1913, P.100), others have part of the skull surreptitiously taken (Ertach Kernow, 2024), whilst a third has a rib left out of respect in St Méen (Lapa, 2014).

Conclusion

The writings about St Petroc sometimes may appear fanciful and imagined but so may the miracles that Jesus performed in the Holy Bible. It cannot be said with surety that these things did not happen, but only that they seem unlikely to modern scientific brains. The fact that Petroc lived and was a real person again is not in doubt but that some of the authorship is questionable. After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII and the destroying of all the service books and anything to do with the saints everything has had to be deduced from fragments and two copies of St Petroc's Life in Europe. These two Lives are similar, however the Gotha version includes more detail than the St Méen, which is thought to be a condensed work.

St Petroc is portrayed throughout as a genteel, solitary man, most likely of Welsh birth, who loved the natural world but someone who also worked physically hard. His

monasteries and hermitages ran on without him but no doubt felt his loss deeply, as Taizé did at the loss of their founder Brother Roger.

The writings, although fanciful at times, bring to life the person of St Petroc, his nature of quietude and need for solitary time with God, as some are called to do.

Reference List

Baring-Gould, S., (1908), *The Lives of the British Saints*. London: Charles J. Clark.

Baring-Gould, S., (1913), *The Lives of the British Saints*. London: Charles J. Clark.

Baring-Gould, S., (1914), *The Lives of the Saints with Intro and Additional Lives of English Martyrs, Cornish, Scottis*. Edinburgh: John Grant.

Baring-Gould, S., (1923), *A Book of Cornwall*. London: Methuen & Co.

Brown, M., (2021), *The Word and the Shaping of Cornwall Before the Reformation*.

London: Francis Boutle Publishers.

Copeland Borlase, W., (1878), *The Age of the Saints*. Truro: Lake and Lake.

Cornwall Calling, (2024), *St Petroc*, Cornwall Travel and Tourist Information. Available at: <https://www.cornwall-calling.co.uk/famous-cornish-people/st-petroc.htm>

(Accessed: 30 October 2024).

Doble, G., (1965), *The Saints of Cornwall Part Four Newquay, Padstow and Bodmin*

District. Oxford: The Holywell Press.

Ertach Kernow, (2024), *Lighting up Cornwall's age of the Saints*. Available at:

<https://www.cornwallheritage.com/ertach-kernow-blogs/ertach-kernow-lighting-up-cornwalls-age-of-saints/> (Accessed: 30 October 2024).

Jankulak, K., (2000), *The Medieval Cult of St Petroc*. Martlesham, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer.

John, R., (2001), *The Saints of Cornwall 1500 Years of Christian Landscape*. Padstow: Tabb House.

Kessler, P., (2024), 'Dumnonia / Defnas (Romano-Britons)', *Celtic Kingdoms of the British Isles, Celts of Britain*. Available at: <https://www.historyfiles.co.uk/KingListsBritain/BritainDumnonia.htm> (Accessed 24 December 2024).

Lapa, D., (2014), 'Venerable Petroc of Cornwall', *Orthodox Christianity*. Available at: <https://orthochristian.com/71371.html> (Accessed: 30 October 2024).

Olson, L., (1989), *Studies in Celtic History Early Monasteries in Cornwall*. Suffolk: The Boydell Press.

Orme, N., (1996), *English Church Dedications*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

Orme, N., (2002), *The Saints of Cornwall*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Orme, N., (2007), *Cornwall and the Cross Christianity 500 – 1560*. Chichester: Victoria County House.

Padel, O., (1985), *Cornish Place-Name Elements*. Nottingham: English Place-Name Society.

Pearse, R., (2024), 'St Petroc: The Hagiographical Sources', *Roger Pearse Thoughts On Antiquity, Patristics, Information Access, and More*. Available at: <https://www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/2024/06/06/st-petroc-the-hagiographical-sources/> (Accessed: 30 October 2024).

Phillips, J., (2005), *Brother Roger of Taizé 1915 – 2005*, Methodist Church services, unpublished.

Roscarrock, N., (1992), *Lives of the Saints: Cornwall and Devon*. Exeter: BPCC Wheatons Ltd.

Russian True Orthodox Church, (2019), 'Saint Petroc, Abbot of Padstow and those With Him', *True Orthodox Diocese of Western Europe*. Available at: <https://trueorthodox.eu/?s=petroc> (Accessed: 30 October 2024).

Sharpe, R., (1991), 'The Writing of Saints' Lives in Medieval Ireland', *Oxford Academic*. Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/book/36374/chapter-abstract/319934096?redirectedFrom=fulltext> (Accessed: 22 December 2024).

Smith, W., and Lockwood, J., (2020), *Latin – English Dictionary*. Edinburgh: Chambers.

Socii Bollandiani, (1898-1901), *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes. Available at: <https://archive.org/details/bibliothecahagio01boll/page/n7/mode/2up> (Accessed: 22 December 2024).

Taylor, T., (1916), *The Celtic Christianity of Cornwall*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.

Williams, D., (2004), *Henry and Katherine Jenner, a Celebration of Cornwall's Culture, Language and Identity*. London: Francis Boutle Publishers.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Places dedicated to St Petroc

Cornwall and Devon (Orme, 1996, p.22)

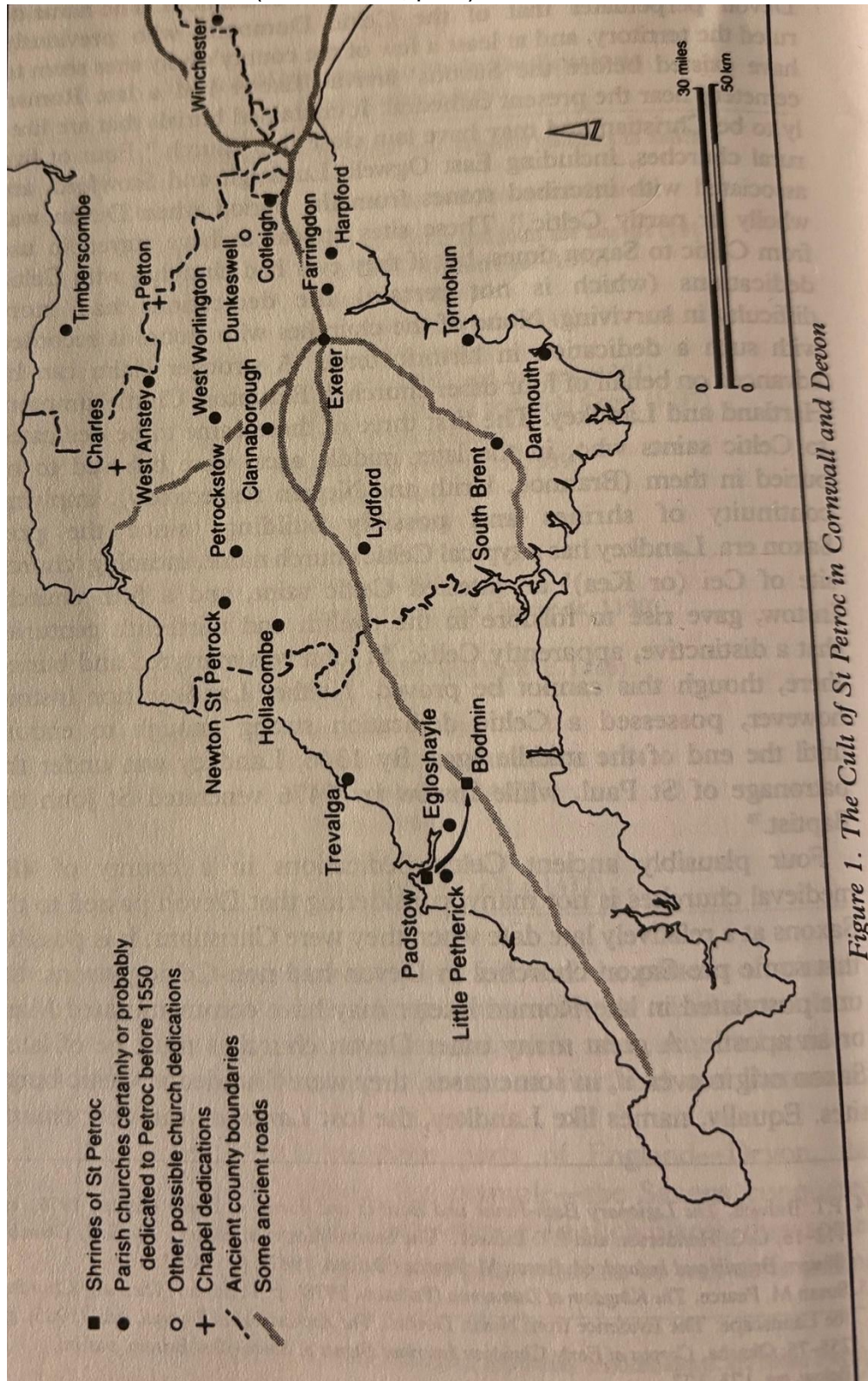
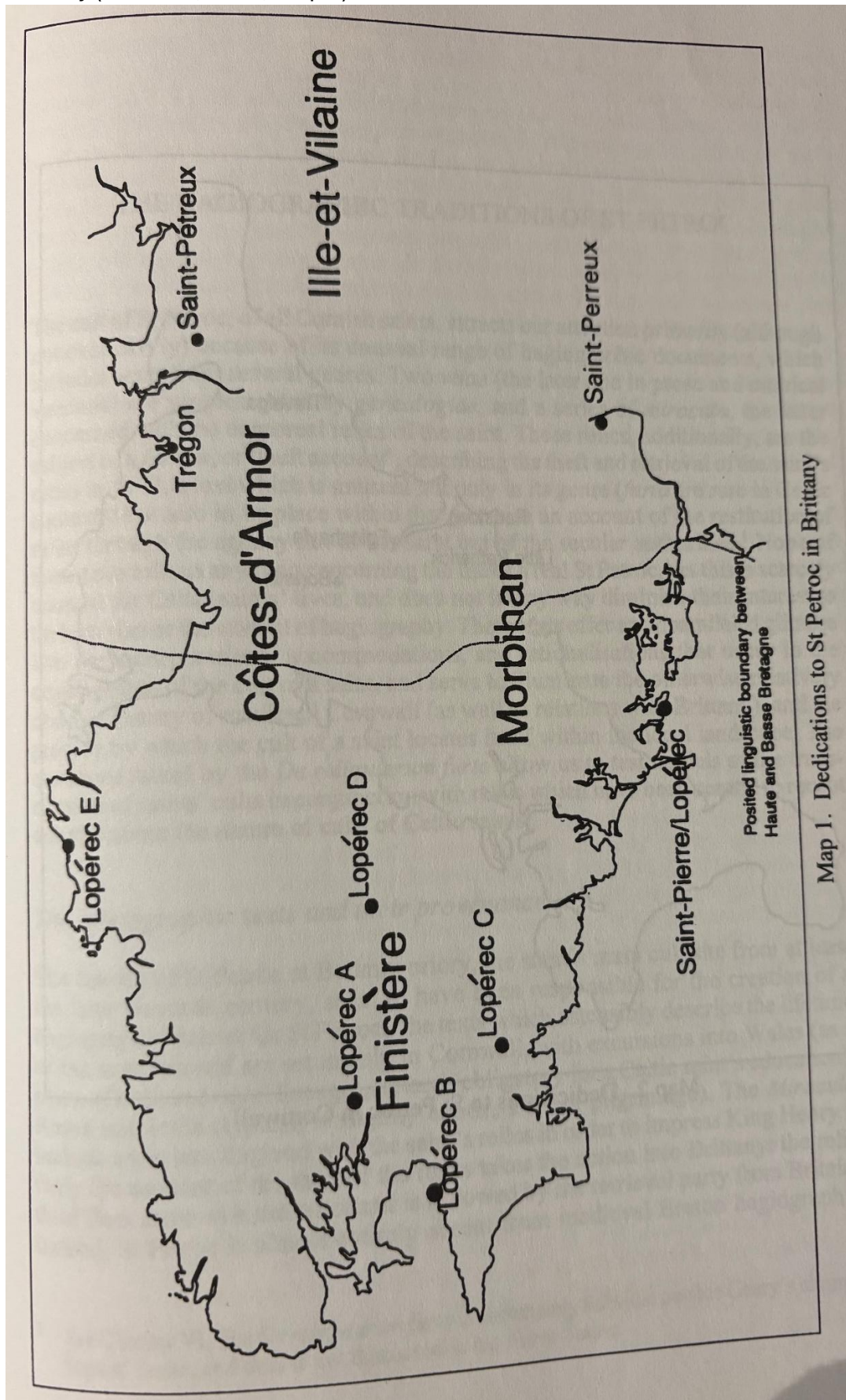


Figure 1. The Cult of St Petroc in Cornwall and Devon



Map 1. Dedications to St Petroc in Brittany

Appendix 2: Gotha Manuscript

Author seeming to justify the authenticity of his writing (Doble, 1965, p.134)

“some older documents which he found *in veteranis scedis*, though they were regarded in the monastery as containing “some absurd things, better passed over in silence.” He has re-written what he found *inantiquis libriis, et cultiori sermone adornavi*, and has added at the end some things he had heard himself as a boy, and some which he had been told about by a greatly respected monk of Montacute, Ralph [Radulphus Montis Acuti (Jankulak, 2000, p.5)], who witnessed them. Of some of these facts there were other surviving witnesses, *transmarini* [overseas – by my translation from Chambers Latin dictionary (Smith and Lockwood, 2020)] *et cismarini* [this side of the sea, Britain (Smith and Lockwood, 2020)], who had been present *uni solempni miraculo* [at one single miracle (Smith and Lockwood, 2020)].”

Appendix 3: St Petroc standing in cold water

Saints are recorded as standing in cold water for lengths of time to suppress sexual urges (Russian True Orthodox Church, 2019)

“Petroc entered the cell with his disciples, and there for full thirty years he lived, and led so innocent a life that he did to none what he would not be done to himself, and so afflicted his body with vigils and endurance of cold that, to repress the unlawful motions of concupiscence, he often plunged himself into the middle of a torrent, and stood there naked from cockcrow till dawn”

Appendix 4: Authenticity of Lives

Lives seeming to be written to a set pattern rather than historical fact
(C-Borlase, 1878, p.11)

“A monk of the nearest monastery, who had pretensions to authorship, would be employed very likely to write a religious romance to be read in the church of such and such a place upon the feast day, and for this purpose would be supplied with a few local names and such traditions as were still lingering on amongst the gossips of the vicinity. At times the author might have been a native of the place for which he wrote, and in that case the local stories would be made the most of. In the absence. However, of any material such as this, incidents in the life of Christ or the Apostles, occurrences in the Old Testament, or miraculous performances previously attributed to other Saints, were (when the inventive genius failed) transferred to new names and places with a boldness that was worthy of a better cause. “In looking at these compositions, we seem at first sight to have a history ready cut out for us,” but in the words of Dr Arnold, speaking of the early legends of Rome, “if we press on any part of this show of knowledge, it yields before us and comes to nothing.” “We have no criterion,” adds Mr Rees, “except our own subjective impressions whereby to distinguish fiction from truth; and we are in continual danger of mistake if we try to transform the one into the other.” The claim of the legends to be read as authentic history would not have been advanced even by the authors themselves, as Mr Boase points out in the case of St Bernard, who, having himself written a life of St Malachi brimming over with the marvellous, warns others against believing in similar fictions.”

Appendix 5: Peaceful assimilation of natives

(Brown, 2021, p.19)

“He subsequently took a softly softly approach, patronising the cults of St Buriana and St Petroc as part of a policy of peaceful assimilation ... in the far West and seeking to win hearts and minds by celebrating its Celtic roots”.

Appendix 6: Binding of St Samson's hands

(Baring-Gould, 1913, p.97)

“Sampson ita membris diriguit, ut instrumentum, quo terram evertere solebat, manu movere non posset”

[by my translation: *manu*=hands, *movere non posset*=could not move (Smith and Lockwood, 2020)]

Appendix 7: Translation of ‘Bodmin’

Differing translations of the place name ‘Bodmin’ (Lapa, 2014; Padel, 1985, p.163; Olson, 1989, p.55)

Lapa (2014) has Bodmin as ‘dwelling of monks’

Padel (1985, p.163) has *bod* as ‘dwelling’ with the Breton *minihi* as ‘refuge’

Olson (1989, p.55) has *meneghi* as ‘sanctuary’ rather than *menegh* as ‘monk’

All of these are similar and infer a dwelling place as a place of holy sanctity.

Appendix 8: Statue of St Petroc and the stag at Lopérec in Cornouaille
(John, 2001, p.66)



Appendix 9: Brother Roger of Taizé

Article I wrote, including my own photographs, for distribution in church when I took services, on my return from Taizé and Brother Roger's funeral in 2005 (Phillips, 2005)

BROTHER ROGER OF TAIZÉ 1915 - 2005



Brother Roger founded the Taizé Community in 1940 in Burgundy, France. Like Thomas A Becket in Canterbury before him, on Tuesday the 16th of August 2005 he was brutally murdered in the Church of Reconciliation during Evening Prayer. Martyred in his own church.

The South West group of young pilgrims were asked if they wished to continue with their travel plans scheduled for Saturday. They all agreed without hesitation.

Customs at Dover clinically asked the coach driver what the nature of his party was. The gruff reply came, "Their religious leader has died and I'm taking them to his funeral." Generating the incredulous response, "They're all religious?"

Brother Rob started our talk on Monday saying, 'There is much sorrow in our hearts but in the Community there is also peace in our hearts. We hope you can experience a bit of that in these days. Brother Roger always spoke of it. There are no words to express what has happened. The view you gain from the media is distorted. People here were struck by how everything was done with serenity, all uplifted in prayer. Everything continues here in Taizé.' We all broke into applause at this last phrase.

This event has put Taizé and Christianity to the top of the news agenda and people's consciousness.

It's been a different week in Taizé this year, full of mixed emotions. 12,000 of us came for the funeral along with the media, Politicians, Gendarmes, Red Cross, Pompiers. A strange sight in Taizé.

On the morning of the funeral Brother Rob read a quote from the Monastery of Grande Chartreuse, “The dramatic circumstances of Brother Roger’s death are nothing but an outer covering making yet clearer his vulnerability, something that he cultivated as a preferred doorway through which God can come and enter us.” Be thankful today and praise God for his life.’

Brother Rob said later, ‘We are now moving from a time of firm foundation to a time of continuity.’ I for one intend to support them through this and I know of at least 12,000 others who will do the same. It was truly a privilege to be welcomed to Taizé at that time and an honour to be allowed to pay my respects in person to such a Christ-like man.

12,000, and countless more, hearts have been broken by this tragedy. I pray we will all feel God’s peace in our hearts through the sadness.

Please keep Brother Alois, new Prior of Taizé, and the Community in your thoughts and prayers.

Jane Phillips (2005)



Appendix 10: St Petroc as Cumbrian

Potential cause of St Petroc's nationality being recorded as Cumbrian (Baring-Gould, 1913, p.95)

John of Tynemouth places St Petroc as 'Nazione Cumber' [by my translation 'nationality from Cumbria' (Smith and Lockwood, 2020)]

William of Worcester followed John of Tynemouth's transcription, writing "Sanctus Petrocus, rex patiae Cumbroꝝ" [Cumbrian (Smith and Lockwood, 2020)]

This has the potential of being a corruption of 'Cambria' in Wales.